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The History
# of the
Harlequinade

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The History of

the Harlequinade

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THE HISTORY OF THE HARLEQUINADE

INTRODUCTION

THE first mime, or rather the first comic actor, was he who leapt upon a bench or table to delight the assembly by his singing, his dancing or his relation of an amusing story. Improvisation prompted all such early attempts.

Some of these primitive comedians assemble in Icaria under the direction of Susarion, who gives a form and a sequence to their buffooneries, and they set out to trail their booths and chariots through the cities of Greece (800 B.C.).

They represent a slave with shaven head, a drunkard rubicund of face, brutalised by libations, an obese glutton, who tumbles incessantly. Soon comic poets, such as Magnes, Achæus and Timocreon, conceive for them performances mingled with comic dances (termed *cordaces*) and pantomimes.

Thespis, born in Icaria, sets up a theatre, assigns rôles to his mimes, dresses them grotesquely, parades them in chariots, their faces smeared with dregs or soot, and sets about presenting little dramas and comedies mingled with music. He detaches from the chorus an individual, assigns to him a rôle and thus creates the *corypheus*. Æschylus the Athenian (393 B.C.) adds a second one. Thenceforward no comic or tragic performances are given without music.

In Athens and in Sparta charlatans set up their trestles in public places, and by means of their displays attract a crowd, to whom they then proceed to sell their unguents (400 B.C.). Here we behold among others a thieving rogue, or a foreign doctor who speaks a ridiculous dialect.

Whilst Aristophanes is performing his comedies in the great theatre, the streets of Athens are encumbered by diviners, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, jugglers, equilibrists, rope dancers and prestidigitators, amongst whom are cited Theodorus and Euryclides.

In the theatre we behold equilibrist performances, such as the leap on that earliest of spring-boards, the air-inflated goatskin. From these performances were derived the rope dancers, called by the Greeks *schœnobates* and *acrobates*, and later, by the Latins, *funambuli*.

Among the Greek actors we find several classes, the *ethologues*, famous in Magna Græcia and in Alexandria, who display the lowest and most corrupt of manners; the *biologues*, who portray and parody the personages of their day; the *cinedologues*, also called *simodes* and *lysiodes*, from Susim of Magnesia and Lysis, the authors of their pieces, who perform and utter obscenities; the *hilarodes*, dressed in white, shod with sandals and wearing golden crowns on their heads, who act and sing to the accompaniment of string instruments; and the *phallophores*, a name fully justified by a part of their costume, as is to be seen in all the monuments that have survived. At Sicyonia, where the *phallic* choirs and the scenes called *episodes* are more ancient than in Athens, the actors preserve this name of *phallophores*.

Later this Sicyonian phallophore, his countenance blackened with soot or concealed under a papyrus mask, is transformed into a *planipes* in Rome and becomes in the sixteenth century the Bergamese Harlequin.

All these actors performing on the orchestra very close to the spectators found it unnecessary to increase their height by the aid of the buskin with elevated heels. They played without masks, their countenances merely smeared in various colours according to the types which they represented. Women, too, performed on the orchestra, singing, miming and moving in the pieces that did duty as interludes, much after the fashion of our modern actresses.

These female mimes passed from the Doric countries into Sicily and Magna Græcia, and finally found their way to Rome.

The Etruscans were, in the art of the theatre as in many other things, the preceptors of the Romans. Having long been in communication with the Greeks they possessed stone theatres such as that at Tusculum, long before the Romans had so much as wooden booths. In the year 442 the youth of Rome studied Oscan literature, according to Titus Livy, much as in his own time it devoted itself to the study of Greek letters.

Between Naples and Capua, Atella (to-day Aversa) was one of the first ancient cities to possess a theatre, and above all a particular style of comedy; thus she gave the name of Atellanæ to the first comedies performed in Rome, comedies which derived largely from the satirical and buffoon pieces of the Greeks.

These comedies, interlarded with dancing, singing and pantomime, in which the actors improvised upon a *scenario*, or agreed subject, were full of pleasantries and quips, and they very quickly eclipsed the *Saturæ*, the indigenous and national comedies of Rome.

The Roman youth appropriated this style of piece and the right to perform it. The actors of the Atellanæ alone enjoyed exemptions and liberties without limit. Later these pieces became licentious and obscene, and the name of Atellanæ was given to all those which were written in a ribald style. They were also called *exodiæ* from the custom of playing them after other pieces or at the end of the spectacle. They were performed on the orchestra under the proscenium, hence the name of *comœdiæ planipediæ*, because the actors dispensed with buskins. They dispensed also with those enormous masks termed *personæ*.

The *tabernariæ* comedies, the subjects for which were drawn from the lower orders and from tavern life, were sometimes played in the same manner as the *planipediæ* ; this was also the case with the *togatæ*, in which the actors appeared arrayed in the toga.

The other styles of comedy were designated variously as follows :—mixed comedies, partly developed in speech, partly in mimetic action, such as *The Eunuch* of Terence ; *Motoriæ* comedies, in which all was action, such as *The Amphitryon* of Plautus ; *Palliatæ* comedies, in which the subject, the characters and the costumes were Greek ; *Prætextatæ* comedies, in which the subject and the characters were drawn from the nobility ; *Latinæ* or comic-lachrymose comedies invented by Rhinthonus, a buffoon of Tarentum ; *Statariæ* comedies, which contained a great deal of dialogue and little pantomime, such as the *Asinaria* of Plautus and the *Hecyra* of Terence.

In the performance of some pieces theatrical declamation was shared between two actors, one of whom spoke whilst the other gesticulated. The Abbé du Bos in his critical reflections upon poetry and painting offers the following explanation of this, based upon the writings of Titus Livy :—

"Livius Andronicus, a celebrated poet who lived in Rome some five hundred and fourteen years after its foundation and some sixty years after the opening there of theatres, himself performed in one of his pieces. It was then the custom for dramatic poets to show themselves upon the stage, there to take part in their own works. The people, who took the liberty still taken to-day in France and Italy to demand the repetition of passages with which they were pleased, by dint of crying *bis* caused the poor Andronicus to recite so long that he grew hoarse. Out of all condition to continue to declaim, he induced his audience to consent that a slave placed in front of the instrumental performer should recite the phrases, and, whilst the slave recited, Andronicus went through the same gestures which he had made when reciting himself. It was observed then that his action was very much more animated because he employed all his energies in gesticulation, whilst another was entrusted with the labour of enunciation ; hence, according to Titus Livy, was born the custom of dividing the declamation between two actors, and of reciting, as it were, to the rhythm of the gestures of the comedian."

"Of all the Roman spectacles," says M. Charles Magnin, "none was more appreciated than pantomime ; it became even peculiar to this people to whom the masterpieces of the Greek tragedies were foreign." They required shows, but shows contrived for the eyes. This term *pantomime*, signifying imitator of all things, suggests that these actors had the art of rendering all manner of subjects by gesture alone. Lucian says that sometimes the subject of the piece performed by the pantomime was sung, and that at other times he performed, in silence, expressing the verses by his mute action.

"This spectacle," says M. Charles Magnin, "which admitted no words, was better suited than any other to the suspicious politics of the emperors; and it possessed moreover the inappreciable advantage of supplying a sort of language intelligible and common to all those nations so diverse in their idioms and customs that composed the Roman empire."

And further on he says:

"Observe in what terms Nonnus of Panopolis, a poet of the time of Theodosius, speaks of the pantomime in Book VIII. of his Dionysiaca: 'there are gestures that have a language, hands that have a mouth, fingers that have a voice.'

"Although the use of the mask permitted the Roman mimes to perform either male or female rôles, nevertheless, female mimes were already in existence in the fourth century. The incredible licence of this epoch rendered the presence of women necessary to the enjoyment of the crowd. They appeared with uncovered heads, and often—incredible statement!—entirely nude. They swam thus before the spectators in a sort of vat or basin placed upon the large orchestra.

"The number of the Roman mimes in the fourth century is hardly credible. Ammianus Marcellinus reports, as a thing shameful to the Romans, that in the reign of Constantius, when the fear of famine compelled the authorities to expel from

Rome all strangers practising the liberal arts, six thousand mimes were suffered to remain there undisturbed."

Already, before the Christian era, the *funambuli* or rope dancers were a source of sensation in Rome. The Romans preferred their spectacles to all others. Terence himself experienced this; and he laments that during the performance of one of his pieces the appearance of a new *funambulus* so attracted the notice of the spectators that they could give no thought or attention to anyone else. *Ita populus, studio spectaculi cupidus in funambulo animam occupaverat.*

The celebrated perfection of the ancient mimes amazes us when we consider the masks they wore, which must have deprived them of all power of expression and even of the natural character of their countenances, unless this superimposed face was contrived with such art and scenic experience as to render it effective at a given distance. These masks, however, were less deformed than those of other actors, since at least they were not equipped with those enormous mouths whose aim was to increase the volume of the voice—a measure necessary in the vast theatres of antiquity.

It may be well to enter into some details of the uses of the ancient mask, with which the mask worn by the actors of the Italian comedy is undoubtedly connected.

We know already that the chief advantage of those ancient scenic masks was to enable men to appear in female rôles. This mask was a kind of great helmet covering the entire head of the actor and representing, in addition to the features of the countenance, the hair, the ears and even the ornaments which women might employ in their headdresses.

This mask was called *persona*; it is thus that Phædrus, Horace and other authors have named it in their works. It appears that the earliest were contrived of bark; later they were made of leather, lined with cloth; but as their shapes were liable to distortion it became the custom to make them all of a light wood, and it was conceived, moreover, that they should be constructed in a manner calculated to increase the volume of the actor's voice; this was accomplished either by lining them with plates of bronze or other sonorous material, or else by fitting to the interior of the mouth a sort of trumpet which was to have the effect of a megaphone. Hence is it that a large number of these masks have mouths of a size and an extent that render them hideous at close quarters; but it should be considered that this deformity was no doubt diminished when they were seen from a distance, the spectator then being able to perceive no more than a very strongly marked expression.

Aulus-Gellius, who wrote under the Emperor Adrian, gives us the following account of the effect of these masks in increasing the voice:—

> "The entire head and face of the actor being enclosed within the mask, so that the voice could issue by only one restricted opening, it follows that the voice thus confined must be greatly increased in volume and distinctness. This is why the Latins have given the name of *persona* to these masks, because they cause the voices of those who wear them to resound and reverberate."

It was natural to provide different sorts of masks according to the employment for which they were destined. Consequently they were divided into comic, tragic and satiric masks. These last in particular were horribly overcast, and no doubt very much larger than the others, because, being intended to represent fauns, satyrs or cyclops, which poetical imagination depicted as superhuman beings, the actors entrusted with these rôles had to appear as men very much above the natural. Consequently they never failed to increase their stature in proportion to the size of their masks.

Only the masks designed for feminine rôles or those worn by dancers were, far from being deformed, of pleasing and regular features. They were called, according to Lucian, mute or orchestric masks.

We also know that among the Greeks, where the aim of comedy, more free than amongst the Romans, was to depict living citizens, the actors wore masks displaying the features of those persons whom they portrayed. It is thus that Aristophanes in his comedy of the *Clouds* gave one of his actors a mask which so perfectly resembled Socrates that the spectators thought to behold the man himself upon the stage. The Romans corrected this abuse, and it seems that in the comedies of Terence the masks of the actors expressed the age, the condition, the manners and the nature of the character, but without ever offering to the spectators any features with which they were acquainted.

The name of histrion, which is derived from the Etruscan *hister*, came from Etruria to Rome together with scenic performances; it became the designation of all actors. These were for the most part slaves or freedmen who did not enjoy the privilege of Roman citizenship. Moreover, any citizen who should have been so ill advised as to appear upon the stage to perform or declaim would thereby have forfeited his civic rights. For the rest, only the law was rigorous with histrions; custom dealt with them tolerantly. We know that an actor could become rich, and free if he were a slave, when by his genius and his talents he attained celebrity.

Quintus Roscius, a famous Roman actor, born 129 B.C., earned from five to six hundred thousand sesterces, and the actor Esopus, his contemporary, left to his son, on his death-bed, a fortune of twenty million sesterces[1] acquired entirely in the theatre.

Sorix and Metrobius were his contemporaries, and shared with him the friendship and favour of Sylla.

The city of Tarentum, in Magna Græcia, was famous for its actors, who came to Rome after the conquest of their city. Cleon performed his mimetics to the sound of the flute; he was the most celebrated actor in all Italy and played without mask, like Nymphodorus, his rival. Istomachus, who, at first a charlatan, followed later in the ways of Cleon, began by performing his farces in the public squares; afterwards, when he had acquired a certain celebrity, he set up a theatre for his shows.

Esopus, according to Quintilian, was considered one of the greatest tragedians of Rome, whilst Roscius excelled as a comic actor; he was the friend of Cicero, and as esteemed for his talents as for his probity. He had brought that art of gesture which the Latins called *saltatio* to such a point of perfection that Cicero often challenged him as to which of them would render the same thought with the greater eloquence, the one by gesture, or the other by word.

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[1] About £160,000 of our present money.

INTRODUCTION

Pylades and Bathyllus, in the first century, were both famous as pantomime actors, and the former assembled a troupe which enjoyed a wide celebrity. Lentulus, mime and mimographer, lived also in the first century under Domitian and Trajan.

In the third century, Genes or Genest of Rome, a comedian, was martyred.

In addition to the actors subsidised by the State there were itinerant mountebanks, mimes and buffoons—the etymology of which, *buffo*, is derived from the action of inflating the cheeks so that the smacks which the actor is to receive must make more noise, and induce to greater laughter. All these mountebanks overran Italy, and performed their pieces, which were in the nature of Atellanæ, and written—like those intended for the great theatres—in verse, which was often sung to accompaniments on the flute.

The Romans, like the Greeks, had also their *nevrospastes* or marionette performers, for we see the actors of the Atellanæ borrowing religious pomps, such as the *Manducus*, from the ancient marionettes. "Thus was established in Rome," says M. Charles Magnin, "a sort of interchange between the characters of the Atellanæ and those of the theatre of marionettes, just as much more recently in France the masks of the Italian comedy mingled, and, as it were, duplicated themselves with the actors of the troop of *Polichinelle*; so that it is not easy to know whether in certain rôles marionettes preceded living actors or living actors preceded marionettes." The marionettes, or *αὔτοματα*, as Aristotle calls them, were brought from Egypt into Greece.

It is necessary to sketch the history of this theatre, for it is essential to that of certain types of the Italian comedy.

Herodotus relates that the origin of puppets on wires is of the greatest antiquity; but he claims to have seen the women of Egypt bearing in procession, in the religious festivals of Osiris, whom he calls Bacchus, images which sometimes were veritable statues, certain parts of whose bodies were moved by cords. The Greeks appropriated this mechanism, but they did not confine the uses of it to religious ceremonies; they employed these automata in the theatre.

Similarly in the religious ceremony, which in Rome preceded the games in the circus and the triumphs, wooden statues were carried which were equipped with hidden strings. Amongst them were the African ghouls, known as Lamiæ, and the sharp-toothed Manducus, the eater of children, a monster with a human head (undoubtedly the primitive type of Mâchecroûte and Croquemitaine), which opened, says Rabelais, in *Pantagruel*, "large and horrific mandibles, armed with teeth, above and below, which by means of the device of the little hidden cord, were made terrifically to clash the one against the other."

The identical custom of promenading monsters and colossal figures is to be found again in the Middle Ages, with the difference, however, that instead of being paraded in the triumphs of emperors they are now seen in the anniversaries of the holy bishops, canonised for delivering the country of awesome monsters, or just simply for having curbed idolatry; even in the processions of our own day we may behold monsters, whose jaws are armed with horrible teeth, or a giant Goliath and a Saint Christopher moving arms and legs.

This name of *marionnette* is derived from *Maria*, *Mariola*, a diminutive which the young girls in the Middle Ages gave to the little figures of the Virgin exhibited in churches and by the wayside. Our fathers have drawn therefrom various derivatives, *marote*, *mariotte*, *mariole*, *mariette*, *marion*, and lastly *marionnette*. All these infantile names, given at first to young girls, were appropriated afterwards by mountebanks for their wooden puppets, which they called *marmozets* and *mariottes*, as they are still called in Languedoc.

In 1550, in Italy, they were called *bagatelli* and *magatelli*; but when BURATTINO, one of the masks of the Italian comedy, came to be personified among the marionettes, he bestowed his name upon them, and they came generally to be known as *burattini*, from the end of the sixteenth century onwards.

The names of *burattini* and *fantoccini* are given to those whose limbs are articulated and moved by wires, whilst *bamboccie* applies to those that are worked by a string stretched horizontally from a stick on the one side, to the performer's knee on the other; these are still in use among the little savoyards who "make *la Catarina* dance." *Puppi* and *pupazzi* describe those whose hands and heads only are of wood. The body is merely a cloth pocket, into which the hand is introduced; the thumb and the middle finger work the arms, the index moves the head, being thrust into the hollow neck. These marionettes, simple in their structure, go a long way back. It was by means of them—easy of transport and maintenance as they are, and as is also their theatre, a mere booth of a primitive simplicity revealing no more than the upper half of their bodies—that the traditions of farce and satire were preserved throughout the Middle Ages.

In Spain the marionettes bear the name of *titeres* but they are more commonly called *bonifrates* because in their masque performances they always represent hermits and saintly characters. "The crowd," says M. Charles Magnin, "has ever shown itself greedy of scenic amusements, and when it has not been possible to obtain comedians, the people themselves have been their own comedians and buffoons. Well might the Church condescend to the mimetic inclinations of the multitude and strongly endeavour to satisfy the bizarre fancies of the crowd by serious, and sometimes comic, representations; well might she give to the laity a rôle in the sacred ceremonies. But there remained ever outside the Church a surplus of unsatisfied mimetic passion which demanded, notwithstanding all inhibitions, the maintenance of comedians and dancers in the public places."

In the fourth and fifth centuries the little familiar dramas, similar in manner to the later Italian subjects, were greatly in vogue in the Greek and Roman theatres. Women took part in them. As for the subjects of the pieces, they were always, say the Fathers of the Church, intrigues of gallantry and the misadventures of guardians or betrayed husbands. "Philosophers and doctors are always ridiculed in them. We behold more or less the same subjects and the same characters as those which passed later into the Italian comedy."

Cassiodorus, writing in 560, says that the performances of mimes and pantomimes are still flourishing in his day.

The Fathers of the Church sought to extinguish the last traces of paganism by forbidding comedies and all histrionic performances, upon the ground that they were impious and sacrilegious. But the taste and the passion for the theatre being inherent in the Italian, the new religion could not succeed in abolishing this art. The Church Victorious—leaving out of consideration the spirit of the early Christians, which contented itself with the Catacombs of Saint Agnes for only temple—felt the need of monuments and luxurious churches and of pomps calculated to strike the imagination. Thus we can see certain dramas and religious representations intermingling with the *mise-en-scène* of Catholicism Triumphant. It is in the very Church itself that dramatic art finds refuge. The theatres had ceased to be places of pleasure and entertainment. The majority had been converted into citadels and fortresses to resist the constant invasions of the Huns, the Vandals, the Goths, the Lombards and the Normans.

Although the people of Italy had no leisure in which to occupy themselves with farces and show-plays when the avalanche of the Northern people descended upon their cities and overran the countryside now desolated by famine, no sooner was a moment of respite conceded to this poor land than the taste for comedy and spectacles was born again of its own ashes.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, who lived in 1224, speaks of the comedy of his day as of a spectacle which had existed for many centuries before him. He calls comedy *histrionatus ars* and comedians *histriones*.

When the feudal and barbarous nobility was compelled, under a pious pretext, to bear arms in the East to stem the incessant wave of Saracen invasion which threatened Christendom, the whole of Europe traversed the civilisation of the empire of the East, and it was upon their return from the Crusades that the pilgrims, their imagination fired by the marvels of Byzantium, performed the remarkable adventures of the knights-errant, miracles of saints and religious legends, first in Italy, and later in France. These were the sources of our theatre. In Italy the histrionic art began to assume two distinct manners: the sacred and religious mystery plays, and the comedies, which continued to be what they had been in the hands of the ancient Latin mimes—that is to say, burlesque farces, improvisations mingled with tumbling, dances and scraps of ancient pieces which the Italian dancers have preserved, often unconsciously, down to our own days.

"It is to the Italians," says Voltaire, in his *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie,* "that we owe the vicious style of drama called *mystery plays*. They began in the thirteenth century and perhaps earlier, by farces drawn from the Old and New Testaments: an unworthy abuse which soon passed into Spain and France! It was a vicious imitation of the attempts which Saint Gregory of Nazianza had made to oppose a Christian theatre to the pagan theatre of Sophocles and Euripides. Saint Gregory of Nazianza infused some eloquence and some dignity into his pieces; the Italians and their imitators introduced into theirs nothing but buffooneries."

With the fourteenth century Italy enters upon a new era, upon the epoch of reflorescence, the renaissance of arts and letters which was not experienced in France until a century later; nevertheless, in the beginning of the fourteenth century Italian influence inspired Luco, the Provençal poet, to compose a satirical piece against the Duke of Anjou, King of Naples. Towards the middle of the same century, Parasolz, another Provençal poet, composed a series of five pieces, or rather a piece in five chapters, against Jeanne I., Queen of Naples; therein her life, her adventures, her crimes, were dragged into the light of day under the titles of *L'Andreasse, La Tarenta, La*

Mahorquina, L'Allemande, La Johanella. This satire was performed at Avignon, before the anti-pope Clement VII. (Robert of Geneva), who was so pleased with the work that he appointed Parasolz Canon of Sisteron.

The Italian language, having been purified by Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, and Ariosto, the fifteenth century was in Italy an epoch of taste, of art and of letters. Whilst in France the theatre was the monopoly of the religious confraternities, jealous of their privileges, in Italy it was always open to the productions of wit and of genius. Two distinct styles existed there: the noble tragedies and comedies written, memorised and recited, such as *Il Pastor Fido* of Guarini, *La Calandra* of the Cardinal of Bibbiena, *La Mandragora* of Macchiavelli, *I Simili* of Giorgio Trissino, *L'Aminta* of Tasso, etc., etc.; and the free theatre of the improvisers given over to singing, dancing, raillery and facetiousness. Whilst in France one might take delight only in mystery plays, into which had been introduced, it is true, many profane and gross pleasantries, or in the plumed mountebanks, who swallowed swords and canes, walked on their hands or with blindfolded eyes, to the sound of tambourines, and performed what is still known to-day as *la danse des œufs*, in Italy the theatre was rediscovered, honoured and cultivated.

Whilst the Zingari, Bohemians or Gypsies, that errant race of Hindu *soudras*, overran Europe, and sometimes took the risk of displaying their *pupazzi* or *magatelli*—which caused them in certain countries to be taken for sorcerers and got them condemned by sentence to be hanged and burnt—troupes of comedians and of buffoons, such as Martino d'Amelia and Gian Manente, went about Italy performing plays written by

Poliziano, Macchiavelli, Ariosto, the Cardinal of Bibbiena, Nicolò Secchi, Tasso, Fedini, Guarini, and others, dramas, tragedies and pieces in which tragedy, comedy and satire were mingled, called *tragisatirocomedie*, improvisations upon given subjects, termed *commedie dell' arte*, and lastly, *commedie sostenute*.

In speaking of the Italian comedies Montaigne says: "I have often conceived a fancy to write comedies such as those of the Italians who are so felicitous in that art. They find in everything something to excite their laughter; they are in no need to tickle themselves."

Throughout the sixteenth century, down to the seventeenth, two distinct theatres were therefore in existence; one occupied by comedians who played impromptu (*commedia dell' arte*) with Harlequin and other masked actors; the other occupied by the academicians, or academic actors, who performed written and regular pieces (the *commedia sostenuta*) which sometimes passed into the theatre of the buffo-comedians.

It was Angelo Beolco, surnamed Ruzzante, who was the first to open a career to the Italian dialects. In 1528 he presented his first prose comedy, in which each character spoke a different dialect. This entertainment became extremely popular. Every locality desired to have its own type represented in it. Hence its infinity of characters and of names, which may be summed up into a few principal types: Harlequin, Pulcinella, the Captain, Scaramouche, Brighella, Pantaloon and the Doctor.

Pulcinella had never ceased to exist from the days of the Atellanæ, in which he went by the name of Maccus, the *mimus albus*.

Casnar, Pappus, the flouted and ridiculous old man, became Pantaloon, and later Cassandro.

The two *Zanni*, Harlequin and Brighella, are the *sanniones* of the ancient theatre; the first is a lackey or loutish peasant, stupid and gluttonous; the second is an astute and wily slave, avenging himself upon his masters by robbing them.

The ancient tradition has been preserved down to our own days in the garments of the characters of the Italian comedy. First the mask, which has been but little modified; for the principal types, such as Pulcinella, Harlequin, Brighella, Pantaloon, Coviello, Tartaglia, still wear the mask which, in itself, lends them an ancient character and, except in the case of old men, a nightcap which conceals the hair and so perpetuates the tradition of the shaven heads of the ancient mimes.

The tradition of that other part of the costume worn by the Greek phallophores was preserved by comedy mimes and buffoons down to the time of Louis XIII. It suffices to cast a glance at such illustrations as Callot's *Les Petits Danseurs*, as Cerimonia, Smaraolo, Scaramuccia, Captain Spezza-Monti and others, to realise this.

Most of the characters also wore the mantle (*il tabaro*), and all the lackeys, like the slaves of the Atellanæ, appeared in short garments. The toga and the long robes were permitted only to the nobles and the old men.

The club of Pulcinella and the bat of Harlequin are probably no more than modifications of the curved staff of the peasants of the Greek theatre, the attribute of the Muse of Comedy.

Other essential analogies are to be considered. First, La

Cantatrice included in all Italian troupes, who, in the manner of the ancient chorus, came to sing and to explain the scenes. Then the modern *planipes*, the Bolognese Narcisino, who still comes, by way of interlude, to chat with the public and scoff at the manners of the day; finally and chiefly the method of performing impromptu, the actors having memorised no rôles and playing after merely having read an outline of the subject nailed up in the wings. These resemblances and many others would prove that the Commedia dell' Arte is no more than the continuation of the theatre of Atella with its improvisations and its free and often licentious scenes, mingled with songs and pantomime.

We have said that every province desired to be represented. Thus Bergamo provided Harlequin and Brighella; Milan supplied Beltrame and Scapino, who are merely varieties of Brighella and Meneghino; Venice contributed Pantaloon and his lackey Zacometo; Naples gave us Pulcinella, Scaramouche, Tartaglia, el Capitan (who became metamorphosed under his Spanish designation) and the Biscegliese. From Rome came Meo-Patacca, Marco-Pepe and Cassandrino, this last a more modern type, a sort of *monsignore*; Florence supplied Stenterello; Bologna, the Doctor and Narcisino; Turin, Gianduja; Calabria, Coviello and Giangurgolo; Sicily, the Baron, Peppe-Nappa, etc., etc.

Harlequin, Brighella, the Doctor and Pantaloon may be called the four fundamental modern masks.

Salvator Rosa indicated seven—namely, these four, and Pulcinella, Tartaglia and Coviello.

Why are these set apart to-day? Perhaps they are so old that they have fallen into disfavour. Where are the Menego, the Truffa, the Zaccagnino, Cavicchio, Bagatino, Ciurlo Guazeto and many others? But then—

"where are the snows of yesteryear?"

When Flaminio Scala travelled through Italy with his troupe, towards the middle of the sixteenth century, a few years after Beolco (Ruzzante), he found the personages of the Commedia already established, and the greater part of them baptized. Nothing remained for him but to bring them into action. Since the advent of the Christian era women had disappeared from the theatre; with the Renaissance they re-entered it again.

Flaminio Scala's company played in Italy from the second half of the sixteenth down to the beginning of the seventeenth century; chiefly they performed *commedie dell' arte* upon subjects very succinctly sketched. Scala did no more than continue the performances of fables and farces which had been played long before his day. He has left us some fifty subjects, printed in 1611. Among the personages in these are Arlecchino, Pedrolino (Pierrot), Burattino, Fritellino, Capitan Spavento, Mezzetino, Pantalone, il Dottore, Cavicchio, and Flaminio Scala himself under the name of Flavio. Thus in the middle of the sixteenth century we find a considerable number of our Italian masks named and performing.

"This same Flaminio Scala," says Riccoboni (in his *History of the Italian Theatre,* written in 1723), "caused his plays to be printed; they contain no dialogue, but merely expound the subject in simple scenarii which are not as concise as those which we use and attach to the walls behind the wings of our theatres, nor yet so prolix that one may derive from them the least hint of the dialogue: they explain merely what the actor is to do and the action in question, and no more."

Evaristo Gherardi, on the subject of performances upon scenarii and the improvisation of the actors in the Commedia dell' Arte, writes as follows :—

". . . The Italian comedians learn nothing by heart, and to perform a comedy it suffices them to have glanced over the subject for a moment before entering the stage. Therefore the chief merit of their pieces is inseparable from the action; the success of their comedies depends absolutely upon the actors, who render them more or less amusingly according to the measure of their personal wit and as a result of the advantages of the situation in which they are placed when playing. It is this necessity of spontaneous performance which renders it so difficult to replace a good Italian comedian. There is no one who may not learn by heart and declaim on the stage what he has learnt; but it is a very different affair in the case of the Italian comedian. He who speaks of a good Italian comedian, speaks of a man of solid qualities, of one who performs from imagination rather than from memory; who in the course of performing invents all that he utters; who knows how to support his fellow-actor on the stage; in short, one who so perfectly weds his actions and his words to those of his fellow-actors that he enters at once into the play and action demanded by the others to such an extent as to make it all appear to have been preconcerted."

Further, on this same subject, here are the sentiments of Riccoboni:

"One may not deny that it has graces peculiar to itself such as the written comedy may never boast. Impromptu affords opportunity for such variety of performance that although you may return again and again to see the same scenario performed, you will always witness a different piece. The actor who performs impromptu performs in a more lively and natural manner than he who discharges a rôle which he has learned by heart. The actor feels more deeply and consequently gives a better delivery to words proceeding from himself than it were possible to give to those borrowed from another by the aid of memory; but these advantages of the impromptu comedy are purchased at the price of great drawbacks; it is necessary that the actors shall be ingenious; it is essential that they shall be more or less of equal talent, because the weakness of impromptu lies in the fact that the best of actors depends absolutely upon those who are his partners in the dialogue; should he find himself playing with one who does not know how to seize with precision the moment of retort or who interrupts him imprudently, his subject languishes or the vivacity of his wit is stifled. Face, voice, sentiment even, may not suffice the actor who performs impromptu; he will not excel unless his imagination is lively and fertile and he is gifted with a great facility of expression, unless he possesses all the niceties of language and unless he has acquired all such special knowledge as may be necessary to enable him to deal effectively with the different situations in which he is placed by his rôle."

The opinion of the witty and very artistic Président de Brosses (1740) may be added to the foregoing.

"This method of performing impromptu which renders the style very weak, renders the action on the other hand very lively and very true. The Italians are natural comedians: even among men of the world you will find in their conversation a fire which does not exist with us, lively though we are accounted. The gesture and the voice inflexion are always wedded to the subject in their theatre; the actors come and go, they speak and move as in their own homes. This action is natural in a very different sense and wears an air of truth very different from that which is seen when four or five French actors, arranged in line, like a bas-relief, on the foreground of the stage, recite their dialogue each speaking in his turn."

Enough has been said to show that the Italian comedy is directly descended from the performances of the ancient Latin mimes; and the genre called *commedia dell' arte* in particular is none other than that of the Atellanæ. It is the only theatre in Europe which has preserved the traditions of antiquity. The theatre in France did not begin to take form until the Italian influence came to soften and to abolish the rudeness of the marvellous and grotesque French mystery plays.

It is often wondered how it could have been possible to play such scenes as that in which two actors, finding themselves on the stage, seek each other and speak without seeing each other; or sometimes five or six characters perform at the same time, forming nevertheless two or three groups, who again do not see one another. These scenes, which are constantly to be found in the plays of Plautus and Ruzzante, are to be explained by the shape and construction of the theatres of antiquity and of the Renaissance, of which a very beautiful specimen, the work of Palladio, is still to be seen at Vicenza.

The auditorium is constructed in the shape of a semicircle supplied with steps. It is surrounded by a colonnade, the intervals between the pillars forming the boxes, and by stairs leading to a gallery which crowns the whole. The stage consists of two parts, the proscenium, a semicircular platform which reaches to the foot of the steps, and behind this the stage proper, bearing the scenery. But the scenery was hung very differently from that in our modern theatres. The stage was divided into three arcades, and under each arcade one saw, upon a sloping ground, a real street with wooden houses; these streets, proceeding from the back of the stage, come to debouch upon the proscenium, which is deemed an open square. The actors may therefore perform and circulate through all the streets, conceal themselves, spy upon one another, listen, or very naturally surprise secrets and mysteries in such a manner as is often impossible in our modern theatres. A further great advantage was that the actors performing, whether on the proscenium or the stage, might be equally well heard in any part of the auditorium owing to its circular construction and to the fact that the stage was not raised as is the case with us. This theatre, called the Olympic, built by Palladio at the beginning of the sixteenth century, is an architectural gem.

On the occasion of the fêtes with which the city of Lyons received Henry II. and Catherine de Medicis in 1548, the Florentine merchants established in that city brought at their own expense a troupe of Italian comedians to perform the

Cardinal of Bibbiena's *La Calandra* before the King and Queen of France. But the Italian comedy theatre was not seen in Paris until 1570, when it was established there by one Ganasse or Juan Ganassa. Here both tragedy and comedy were performed, and " The charge of admission was up to five or six sous for each person." Ganassa's troupe, authorised by letters patent from the king, does not appear to have made a long sojourn in France. Ganassa had been in Spain in the early years of the reign of Philip II. managing a company of Italian comedians, who performed farces in the Italian language. In this company were included Harlequin, Pantaloon, the Doctor, Pagliaccio, Burattino, and Tabarino whose homonym enjoyed later on so great a vogue in the Place Dauphine in Paris. The performances of these personages and their costumes achieved a great success in Spain, where they made a protracted sojourn before going to France.

Porbus shows in one of his pictures a ball or *divertissement* at the Court of Charles IX. in 1572. In this the king and all his courtiers are to be seen in the costumes of various Italian buffoons. The Duke of Guise (le Balafré) appears as Scaramouche, the Duke of Anjou (Henry III.) as Harlequin, the Cardinal of Lorraine as Pantaloon, Catherine of Medicis as Columbine, and His Very Christian Majesty is seen cutting capers under the mask of Brighella. Singular prelude to the horrible tragedy of the 24th August of the same year!

In 1571 the Italian troupe, known under the name of *I Comici Confidenti*—that is to say, the confident comedians (confident, it was understood, of the indulgence ot the public)—journeyed through the provinces of France. The performances of this company consisted in impromptu comedies, pastorals and written comedies and tragedies.

The famous Celia, whose real name was Maria Malloni, was one of the members of this troupe, as was also Bernardino Lombardi, actor and poet, and Fabrizio di Fornaris, known by the name of Captain Crocodile—Capitan Cocodrillo.

At about the same time a second troupe, under the name of *I Comici Gelosi* (that is to say, zealous, anxious to please the public), came also to France to perform the same style of pieces. This troupe also included some excellent actors, such as Orazio Nobili, of Padua, Adriani Valerini, of Verona, known under the name of Aurelio, and the beautiful Lidia, of Bagnacavallo.

In 1574 the two rival companies amalgamated into a single troupe, which took the name of *I Comici Uniti* (the united comedians); but the Masters of *la Passion* caused the theatre to be closed.

At the end of 1576 the two united troupes separated once more, and again resumed their respective titles of *I Confidenti* and *I Gelosi*. It was then that Flaminio Scala placed himself at the head of the *Gelosi*, and travelled through France and Italy alternately, always encouraged by the greatest success. This troupe was in Venice when Henry III. summoned it to Blois, whence he commanded it to Paris. The arrival of these artists, in 1577, is announced by *L'Etoile* in the following terms:—

" In this month the Italian comedians called *li gelosi*, whom the king had sent for from Venice, and whose ransom he had paid, they having been captured by Huguenots, began the performance of their comedies in the Salle des Etats at Blois;

and the king permitted them to charge a half testoon to all who should come to see them play."

"On Sunday the 19th of May, the Italian comedians, surnamed *li gelosi*, began the performance of their comedies at the Hôtel de Bourbon, in Paris; they charged the members of their audience a fee of four sous per head, and such were the crowds they attracted that the four best preachers of Paris had not amongst them all as many present at their sermons when they discoursed."

"On Saturday, the 27th July, the Italian comedians, *li gelosi*, after having presented at Court letters patent accorded them by the king, permitting them to perform their comedies notwithstanding the prohibition of the Court, were dismissed under plea of objection with prohibition ever to obtain and to present such letters to the Court subject to a penalty of ten thousand livres, to be paid into the poor-box. Notwithstanding this inhibition, in the early part of the following September they renewed the performance of their comedies at the Hôtel de Bourbon, as before, by the king's express command; the corruption of these times being such that comedians, buffoons, harlots and mignons enjoy the fullest credit with the king."

But this company did not long remain in Paris.

"Long sojourns" (says M. Charles Magnin) "were not the custom of these itinerant troupes, and moreover the magistrates, being little in favour of the establishment of new theatres, sustained with rigour the monopoly of the ancient confraternity of *la Passion*, which was then being infringed by professional comedians at the Hôtel de Bourgogne."

The *Gelosi* troupe returned therefore to Florence in 1578; and it was there that Flaminio Scala brought together the most famous Italian company of the sixteenth century. This company visited France on several occasions. It had for its device a two-faced Janus with this legend, punning upon the word *gelosi*:

> "Virtù, fama ed onor ne' ser gelosi."

The principal actors engaged by Flaminio Scala, who himself played lovers under the name of Flavio, were: a young actress named Prudenza, born at Verona, who played second lady, and who had already formed part of the company in 1577 at Blois and in Paris; Giulio Pasquati, of Padua, who played Pantaloon and il Magnifico; Gabriello, of Bologna, creator of the character of Franca-Trippa; Simone, of Bologna, the first to bear the name of Harlequino; Girolamo Salimbeni, of Florence, under the name of Zanobio (an elderly citizen of Piombino); Signora Silvia Roncagli, of Bergamo, who filled soubrette parts under the name of Franceschina; Lodovico, of Bologna, who played Doctor Graziano; Francesco Andreini, of Pistoia, who performed upon "all musical instruments and spoke six or seven languages"; Francesco Bartoli, an able comedian; and Isabella, who married Francesco Andreini (Captain Spavento).

From 1584 to 1585 the troupe called the *Confidenti* was in France. Fabrizio di Fornaris gave a pastoral play and then a comedy (*Angelica*), which was first performed impromptu in Italian at the house of the Duke of Joyeuse. The author himself played the rôle of Captain Crocodile, who spoke only Spanish. This new troupe established itself at the Hôtel de Cluny, but it was driven out by the Confraternity of *la Passion.*

In 1588 there was a fresh attempt by the Italians to establish themselves in Paris. On the subject M. Charles Magnin says:

> "One may read in a remonstrance addressed to the king on the occasion of the opening of the *Seconds Etats,* at Blois, amongst many other plaints, 'that the performances of the Italian strangers are a great evil which it is wrong to tolerate.' Further, a warrant of the 10th of August of this year renews the inhibition to all comedians, whether Italian or French, to give any performance anywhere but at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Evil times rather than this inhibition compelled the Italian actors to return beyond the Alps. During this sad epoch, indeed, there was no room in France for the blithe frolics of Harlequin, Pantaloon, the Bolognese Doctor, Franca-Trippa, Franceschina, and Captain Spavento. The Sixteen and their adherents were giving very different spectacles to France."

In 1600 Henry IV., after the peace of Savoy, at the time of his marriage with Mary of Medicis, introduced from Italy a new troupe which, according to some authors, was none other than that of the *Gelosi,* under the direction of Flaminio Scala. They were lodged in the Rue de la Poterie at the Hôtel d'Argent, and were salaried by the king. They came to an arrangement with the comedians at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and played alternately with them in the theatre of the Rue Mauconseil.

The beautiful and famous Isabella Andreini was the queen of this troupe, and her death in 1604 was the signal for its disbandment. Flaminio Scala retired, worn out by twenty-eight years of work, and occupied himself thereafter with the publication of scenarii.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century Italy possessed several companies of comedians: the *Comici Unitî*, a troupe formed in 1583 by Adriano Valerini of deserters from the camp of the *Gelosi*; the *Confidenti*, who were slowly disappearing; the *Gelosi*, whom we have seen disbanded after the death of Isabella, and a new troupe, inheritor of the glory of the *Gelosi*, which was known and applauded for forty-seven years throughout Europe under the name of the *Comici Fedeli* (the faithful comedians). Giovanni Battista Andreini, the son of Isabella, assumed in 1605 the direction of this company, which, several times renewed, did not disband until 1652. Its principal actors were: Gian-Paolo Fabri, who had already performed under the name of Flaminio in the troupe of the *Uniti*; Nicolo Barbieri, known by the name of Beltrame, who became in 1625 joint director of the troupe with G. B. Andreini; Virginia Ramponi, married to G. B. Andreini in 1601, and known by the name of Florinda; Girolamo Gavarini of Ferrara, known by the name of Captain Rhinoceros (Capitan Rinoceronte); Margarita Luciani, his wife; Lidia, an actress of great merit, who married G. B. Andreini in 1635, after the death of Virginia Ramponi; and Eularia Coris.

In 1613, Mary of Medicis summoned to Paris the troupe of the *Fedeli*, under the direction of G. B. Andreini, who had just dedicated his religious piece *L'Adamo* to the queen. He remained there until 1618, presenting the old repertory of the *Gelosi* and playing now at Court and now in the theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne by arrangement with the French comedians.

In 1621 Andreini was again called to Paris and he remained there, according to M. Ch. Magnin, " until the end of carnival of 1623, having, during these two years, performed to great applause and published five or six pieces of his own in Paris. After a short journey beyond the Alps, he comes yet again to spend the year 1624 and the beginning of 1625 in Paris."

The performances given by his various troupes consisted of comedies, both improvised and memorised, tragedies, and plays of the comic opera and pastoral variety. The dialects of Venice, Naples, Bergamo or Genoa, besides French, German and Castilian, were sometimes employed, in certain pieces of his, such as *La Ferinda.* It is fairly certain that the French public cannot have understood them to any great extent, and the author himself would have to compensate them on the morrow of such performances by giving them such works as *La Centaura* (dedicated to Mary of Medicis).

This equestrian piece presented an entire family of centaurs, father, mother, son and daughter. In the first act they prance in a comedy, in the second they graze happily in a pastoral and in the third they gallop and rear in a tragedy. Numerous and picturesquely bizarre adventures pivot about the father, the son and the mother centaurs, in the course of their combat to recover the crown of the island of Cyprus. Despairing of success in their design, they resolutely kill themselves. This accomplished, the offer of that crown so ardently desired is made to them. The little female centaur, an orphan, sees herself compelled to ascend the throne, which she does at the gallop.

The influence of these Italian comedies, farces and buffooneries, the picturesqueness of the costumes, the impromptu of this class of play, soon begat in France comedians and buffoons who sometimes even surpassed their models. Whilst borrowing the mask, the mantle and the liveries of the Italians, the French comedians very quickly created in the theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne—fallen into discredit on account of the tiresome pieces presented there—characters, half-French, half-Italian, full of originality, wit and mirth, such as Gros-Guillaume, Turlupin, Gaultier-Garguille, Guillot-Gorju and Jodelet, whilst from 1618 to 1625 Tabarin performed in the Place Dauphine, in company with Mondor, his farces in Italian, in Spanish or in French according to the types presented. This was a field in which Molière had the ability to glean as well as in that of the Italian comedy.

In 1639 Louis XIII. summoned from Italy a troupe of players, half singers, half improvisers, which remained but a little while in France. It included the celebrated Tiberio Fiurelli, who went by the name of Scaramouche. These short visits were several times repeated, as we gather from the works of Andreini and Beltrame. They tell us that these troupes of Italian comedians were not settled in Paris. They were sent for and the expenses of their journeys were defrayed; they remained in Paris or attached to the Court for as long as they afforded entertainment, and, after some years, they were given a sum sufficient to meet the expenses of their return journey.

A company summoned to Paris in 1645 by Cardinal Mazarin played at the Petit-Bourbon Theatre. It was made up of Pantaloon, Harlequin, Mezzetin, Trivelino, Isabelle, Columbine, the Doctor, Scaramouche, Aurelia, Gabriella Locatelli, Giulia Gabrielli, and Margarita Bartolazzi.

Here is the title of a piece performed in this theatre :

> "Explanation of the scenery and action of the piece entitled *La Folle Supposée* (*La Finta Pazza*), the work of the celebrated Giulio Strozzi, most illustrious Italian poet, to be performed by the grand royal troupe of Italian comedians, entertained by his Majesty at the Petit-Bourbon, by command of the Queen Mother of the Very Christian King [Louis XIV.] printed in Paris, November 1645.
>
> "Flore will be played by the graceful and pretty *Louise Gabrielle Locatelli*, named Lucile, who by her vivacity will prove herself a true light of harmony. . . .
>
> "Thétis will be played by the signora *Giulia Gabrielli*, named Diane, who will marvellously portray her choler and her love.
>
> "The prologue of this piece will be spoken by the very excellent *Marguerite Bartolazzi*, whose voice is so ravishing that it is impossible worthily to praise it."

Further on we read on the subject of another scene :

> "*Note* : This scene will be entirely without music, but so admirably performed that the harmonies dispensed with will not be missed.
>
> "The first act of the piece concludes with a ballet by four bears and four apes, performing a very amusing dance to the sound of little drums.
>
> "And ostriches will appear and in the course of lowering their necks to drink at a fountain will perform a dance."

Here is the argument of the eighth and last scene of the third act :

> "Nicomedes recognises Pyrrhus for his grandson, and meanwhile there arrives an Indian, who, having made his bow to the king, announces that among the merchandise aboard his ship which the tempest has driven into port, there are five

parrots, of which he makes offer, causing them to be brought on in a cage.

"At the same time four Indians go through a Moorish dance; finally the parrots take flight from the hands of their owners and leave these in despair at the loss; after which the piece concludes and all take ship for the war in Troy."

In 1653 a new troupe appeared, in which again we find some actors who had already visited France several times, such as Tiberio Fiurelli (Scaramouche), Locatelli (Trivelino), and Brigida Bianchi (Aurelia). This troupe was the first to settle definitely in Paris. The Petit-Bourbon Theatre was assigned to them, as well as to the troupe of Spanish comedians who, from 1650 to 1672, played concurrently with the Italians.

The following is an announcement by Loret, who published his letters in verse every Saturday:—

The Historic Muse of Loret, for the 10*th August* 1653

Une troupe de gens comiques.
" Venus des climats italiques.
Dimanche dernier, tout de bon.
Firent dans le Petit-Bourbon.
L'ouverture de leur théâtre
Par un sujet assez folâtre.
Où l'archiplaisant Trivelin,
Qui n'a pas le nez aquilin.
Fit et dit tout plein de folies
Qui semblèrent assez jolies.
Au rapport de certains témoins.
Scaramouche n'en fit pas moins.
Mais pour enchanter les oreilles,
Pâmer, pleurer, faire merveilles,
Mademoiselle Béatrix
Emporta ce jour-là le prix."

N. Turi (of Modena) played the parts of Pantaloon; Angelo-

Agostino-Constantino Lolli (of Bologna) the parts of Doctor Baloardo; Marco Romagnesi, under the name of Orazio, the parts of first lover; Turi the son, under the name of Virginio, those of second lover; Beatrice Adami, under the name of Diamantina, the parts of soubrette; Jean Doucet appeared in the character of a zany; Tiberio Fiurelli in that of Scaramouche; Brigida Bianchi played the parts of leading lady or *amoureuse* under the name of Aurelia, and Domenico Locatelli was seen as Trivelino.

The performances were held between two and five o'clock in the afternoon, the choice of hour being governed by consideration of the mud and thieves encumbering the badly lighted streets of Paris after dark.

This troupe left the Petit-Bourbon in 1660 and found accommodation, by order of the king, together with Molière's company, at the theatre of the Palais-Royal. Performances were given on alternate days and the company, reinforced by several other actors and actresses from Italy, was made up as follows:—

VALERIO, OTTAVIO, Andrea Zanotti.
EULARIA, Orsola Corteze, wife of Domenico.
DIAMANTINA, Patricia Adami, wife of Angelo Lolli.
HARLEQUIN, Giuseppe-Domenico Biancolelli, called *Domenico.*
CINTHIO, Marco-Antonio Romagnesi.
SCARAMOUCHE, Tiberio Fiurelli.
FLAUTINO, Giovanni Gherardi (1675).
MEZZETINO, Angelo Constantini (1682).
COLUMBINE, Catarina Biancolelli, daughter of Domenico.
PIERROT, Giuseppe Giaratone (1684).
PASQUARIELLO, Giuseppe Tortoretti (1685).
AURELIO, Bartolomeo Ranieri (1685).

MARINETTA, Angelica Toscano, wife of Tortoretti.
PULCINELLA,Michel-Angelo da Fracassano (1685).
GRADELINO, Constantino Constantini (1687).
OTTAVIO, Giovanni-Batista Constantini (1687).
HARLEQUIN, Evaristo Gherardi.
LÉANDRO, Charles-Virgile Romagnesi de Belmont.
SPINETTA, BRIGHELLA and the CAPTAIN, whose real names are not known.
LA CANTATRICE, Elisabeth Danneret, called *Babet.*

In 1697 the troupe was expelled from Paris, and the theatre closed as the result of a comedy (*La Fausse Prude*) in which Constantini. who filled the rôle of Harlequin, permitted himself satirical allusions to Madame de Maintenon.

Under the designation of *Théâtres de la Foire* were comprised, down to the end of the eighteenth century, the performance halls established on the sites of the markets of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent, which had begun their existence with rope dancers, trained dogs, etc. It was then that the actors of the forain theatres appropriated the Italian repertory, establishing themselves upon that suspension of privileges and upon the exemptions granted to the traders of the fairs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent.

But the actors of the Comédie-Française, anxious to secure the maintenance of their rights, obtained from M. de la Reynie, the Lieutenant of Police, a sentence including "prohibition to all excepting the French comedians to perform in comedy or farce in the city of Paris under pain of fine."

The forain[1] players appealed against this sentence, and continued their performances pending judgment. There was renewed opposition from the French comedians. M. de la Reynie again forbade the forain players to perform "any spectacle in which there is dialogue."

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[1] *I.e.* players in the Théâtres de la Foire—that is to say, players who set up their theatres at public fairs.

Obedient to this mandate they declared that they would perform no more dialogues, and two or three days later they announced: *Scaramouche and the Scrupulous Pedant*, a comedy in three acts entirely in *monologues*. When a comedian had spoken his part he withdrew to the wings, and he who was to deliver the answer came to take his place to disappear again in his turn and make room for the first one. In this fashion seven actors took part in this comedy.

Derided by the public, and exasperated by the forain players, the actors of the Comédie-Française and the magistrates, accompanied by several squads of the watch, by forty archers, two parliamentary ushers and two constables, invaded the forain theatres on the 20th February 1709, destroying the booths, the benches and the scenery, after which they withdrew extremely proud of having made an end of these recalcitrant folk.

But the forain players did not account themselves beaten. No sooner had the archers departed than, with the aid of the public, they restored the damage in a few hours, and on the morrow they billed a play and performed it as if nothing had happened. But on the next day the ushers and archers reappeared, and this time they did not confine themselves to breaking up and pulling down; they delivered everything to the fire, and for several days twelve archers were on guard over these ruins of farce with no other occupation but that of burning and annihilating.

The forain actors were therefore compelled to submit; but they again found means to re-establish themselves, for some years later they were to be heard singing the following verses of Panard in their theatres :—

> " Les lois ne sont qu'une barrière vaine
> Que les hommes franchissent tous ;
> Car, par-dessus, les grands passent sans peine,
> Les petits, par-dessous."

The directors of the Opéra soon came to understand that no successful opposition could be made to the development of these little theatres, and they sold the right to sing to the theatre of the fair of Saint-Laurent since the Théâtre-Français denied it the right to speak. That theatre thereupon assumed the title of the Opéra-Comique.

Amid the enterprises of the forain theatres were the performances of Bertrand, Alard, the widow Maurice and Decelles, associated and primarily the sole proprietors of the shows given at the fairs. Later on they admitted Dolet and Laplace to share this right with them. Then came Ottavio and Domenico, to be suceecded by Saint-Edme and Madame Baron who, in rivalry with the Chevalier Pellegrin, came to replace Francisque and Lalauze, and finally by Ponteau, who obtained the privilege of the Opéra-Comique from the Royal Academy of Music in 1728, and kept it until 1742.

A large number of more or less celebrated French authors worked for the forain theatre, such as Lesage, Fuzelier, d'Orneval, Panard, Favart, Diderot, Piron, Vadé, Carolet, Sedaine, Dorville, Laffichard, Gallet, Fagan, Dallainval, Boissy, Taconet.

" Who would believe," asks Grimm, in 1772, " that the opera and the two comedy troupes, the French and the Italian, should be perpetually united to persecute by virtue of their privilege, the theatre of the fairs? From the moment that a manager conceives a good idea to attract the public, and from the moment that he attempts something which is tinted by success, that successful thing is forbidden. In the hope of hindering the better classes from patronising these performances, the managers have been forbidden to charge more than twenty-four sous for the best seats, so as to compel decent people to be mingled and confounded with the populace. Preach tolerance and flatter yourselves to see it reign in a country in which Henry IV. and Polichinelle were persecuted with equal fury!"

The theatre of the fairs introduced actors and actresses of recognised merit to the public, and the public have applauded these—the comical and singular performances of Domenico, the son of Harlequin, the naïveté of Belloni as Pierrot, the voice and the slyness of Mademoiselle de Lisle in soubrette rôles, the amusing gibberish of Desgranges as Scaramouche, the grimaces of Paghetti in the rôles of Pantaloon and Cassandre, and the modest air of Mademoiselle Molin as leading lady.

Harlequinades and pantomimes were also played from 1759 to 1771 at the Ambigu-Comique, which was situated then on the Boulevard du Temple, whilst at the Théâtre Gaudon, in 1769, were to be seen performances by Polichinelle, Harlequin, Isabella and other Italian characters.

The four halls of the fair of Saint-Germain were open from the 3rd of February to Palm Sunday. Those of the fair of Saint-Laurent were open from the 1st July to the 30th September, as was also that of the fair of Saint-Ovide, which was made up chiefly of mountebanks and marionette shows.

Some of the Italian types preserved their original form, and were played in costumes adopted long since and remaining invariable. Others, however, underwent changes of name, of character and of costume. Pierrot became Gilles, Pantaloon came to be called Cassandre, Leandro became a ridiculous lover, a coxcomb, a poltroon, a sort of Captain; Jeannot, which in the Italian companies had been no more than a very sketchy character, became a complete and important rôle, and attracted all Paris. Nor yet had the forain actors hesitated to borrow types from the Théatre-Français; thus Crispin, Harpagon, Sganarelle, and Gros-René came to be mingled with the Italian types, a further happy amalgamation which endured until the closing of the fairs of Saint-Laurent and Saint-Germain, fallen into desuetude and out of fashion, in 1789.

The last of the Italian troupes seen in France was that which the regent, Philippe of Orleans, summoned in 1716, under the direction of Louis Riccoboni (named *Lelio*); it was housed at the old Hôtel de Bourgogne in Rue Mauconseil, and was composed as follows:—

LELIO, Luigi Riccoboni.
MARIO, Giuseppe Baletti.
HARLEQUIN, Vicentini, called *Thomassin.*
PANTALOON, Alborghetti.
THE DOCTOR, Matterazzi.
SCAPINO, Bissoni.
SCARAMOUCHE, Giacopo Rauzzini.
FLAMINIA, Elena Baletti.
SILVIA, Gianetta Benozzi.
VIOLETTA, Margarita Rusca.
COLUMBINE, Teresa Biancolelli (1739).
LELIO, Giovanni-Antonio Romagnesi (1725) and Francesco Riccoboni (1726).
HARLEQUIN, Carlo Bertinazzi (1741).

Lelio, Antonio-Luigi Baletti (1741).
Coraline, Anna Veronese (1744).
Camille, Antonia Veronese (1744); Elisabetta Constantini; Mademoiselle Belmont and Mademoiselle Dehesse (1730); Marie Laboras de Mézières (1734); Madame Riccoboni (1762); Madame Favart (1749); Madame Bognioli (1758).
Angélique, Mademoiselle Foulquier, named *Catinon* (1753); Mesdames Vesian, Bacelli, Zamarini, Billoni.

The company of 1716 was called the New Comédie-Italienne, or the Regent's Company, to distinguish it from that of 1653, which it was agreed to name the Old Comédie-Italienne.

The several Italian troupes that played in France, down to that of 1716 inclusive, presented plays of various kinds. They gave a medley of scenes that had been committed to memory, of others that were entirely improvised, of scenes that were played throughout in dumb show, and of dances and singing, all with scenery and such *mise-en-scène* as was then possible. Fireworks were never absent from the opening of a season, the Italians being anxious to preserve their ancient pyrotechnic reputation.

That which in Italy was called *opera* (a work) was nothing more than this intermingling of various genres, of which an instance is afforded by *Le Gelose Politiche e Amorose*, of Pietro Angelo Zaguri, performed in the house of Giovanni Battista Sanuto, in Venice, in 1697. The prologue of this opera took place in an entirely imaginary country, inhabited by Eolus, to whom the Tiber, accompanied by Nymphs, came to pay a visit; it was at once a ballet, a drama, and a tragedy, mingled with couplets and dances.

The troupe of 1653 was chiefly concerned with the performance of pieces without much production, in which music played but a very minor part. The actors were very soon compelled to abandon their improvisations in Italian, as the spectators could not grasp the point of their pleasantries. It was thanks to this compromise that they were able to maintain themselves in France; for we see that the troupe summoned in 1639 by Richelieu—who was a great lover of Italian music and the Italian language—after having performed, danced and sung *L'Ercolano Amante*, was compelled to depart for lack of audiences.

That of 1645, summoned by Mazarin, which performed among other pieces *La Finta Pazza* and *La Rosaura*, would not have enjoyed very much more success but for the spectacular operas (such as *Orpheus*) which roused enthusiasm. In this there were twelve changes of scenery and these represented: a city besieged and defended; a temple surrounded by trees; the banqueting hall on the occasion of the nuptials of Orpheus; a palace interior; the temple of Venus; a forest; the palace of the Sun; a horrible desert; Hades; the Elysian Fields; a wood on the edge of the sea; Olympus and the heavens. The expense of production, the properties and the scenery, designed and painted by Giacomo Torelli, amounted to five hundred and fifty thousand livres.

The pieces played in France by the Italians consisted of bare scenarii, upon which the dialogue was improvised, but into which the actors would also interpolate scenes written for them and learned by heart. Regnard, Palaprat, Delorme, de Montchenay, Lenoble, Mongin, Fatouville, Dufresny, de Bois-France, etc., supplied this theatre with scenarii, some of the scenes of which were written in full and others left entirely to the impromptu wit of the actor. Thanks to Gherardi, who has collected a number of these scenarii (designated *à la françoise*), we are able to judge what French wit could accomplish crippled by a sort of half-and-half language, whose French and Italian components were alike incorrect, offering, consequently, a piquant babble, which combined perhaps better than would have been possible to any other form of speech the fantastic gaiety of both nations. Even in the parodies of the dramas and tragedies of the epoch in which the verse and the rhymes forbade improvisation, the Italian actor would cut into the middle of an act to introduce an entirely irrelevant scene of *lazzi* and of pantomime.

Nevertheless, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, and probably in consequence of the lack of good actors, singing came little by little entirely to displace dialogue. The Comédie-Italienne was no more than a theatre presenting comic operas or written pieces from the pens of Marivaux, d'Alainval, Laffichard, Legrand, Boissy, Delisle, Favart, Sedaine, Desportes, Lanoue, Fuselier, Anseaume, Vadé, etc. French actors were not slow to invade a theatre in which no one any longer spoke Italian.

In 1762 the Comédie-Italienne was amalgamated with the theatre of the Opéra Comique (the old fair of Saint-Laurent), and the troupe was made up as follows :—

Dehesse, *A Lackey* ; Ciaverelli, *Scapin* ; Carlino Bertinazzi, *Harlequin* ; Baletti and Lejeune, *Lovers* ; Champville, *A Ridiculous Lover* ; Zanucci, *Lelio* ; Colalto, *Pantaloon* ; Caillot, *Colus* ; Laruette, *Cassandre* ; Clairval, *Leading Lady* ; Madame Favart, *Soubrette* ; and Mesdames Rivière, Desglands, Bognioli, Laruette, Bérard, Beaupré, Carlin and Mandeville.

In 1779 the administration dismissed the Italian players and thereafter comic operas only were performed. "The Comédie-Italienne having obtained permission not to perform any more Italian pieces, has replaced these by others of its old repertory which it had entirely abandoned after its amalgamation with the Opéra Comique. Therefore all our ultramontané actors have been dismissed with the exception of Carlino Bertinazzi and his double, who continue to perform their rôles of Harlequin in the French pieces" (Grimm, April 1779).

In 1780 the theatre of the Comédie-Italienne assumed the name of Théâtre des Italiens notwithstanding that there was no longer a single Italian actor connected with it.

In 1783, when the hall in the Rue Mauconseil began to show signs of falling into ruin, a theatre was built on the side of the Hôtel de Choiseul, on the Boulevard des Italiens, and the *Théâtre des Italiens* assumed the name of the *Théâtre-Favart.* Necessary repairs compelled the company to abandon it and to transfer themselves to the theatre of the Rue Feydeau, which was destined for a company coming from Italy. This company arrived in 1789 under the protection of Monsieur, the king's brother.

After this rapid sketch of the history of the Italian comic style and of its types, let us say with the learned M. Charles Magnin, whose researches are so precious, that "the popular and plebeian drama along the open roads and in unroofed spaces has never failed to lighten the sadness of the serfs and the brief leisures of the rustics; it is an indestructible theatre which lives again in our own day in the open-air performances of Deburau, a theatre which links together the ancient and the modern stages. Erudition may discover for these *joculatores*, for these *delusores*, and for these *goliardi* of our own times and of the Middle Ages the most honourable ancestry in Greek, Latin, Oscan, Etruscan, Sicilian and Asiatic antiquity, from Æsop the wise Phrygian hunchback down to Maccus, the jovial and disguised Calabrian, the hero of the Atellanæ farces, who has since become in the streets of Naples, by the simple translation of his name, the very sprightly Master Pulcinella."

Pierrot, Harlequin, Pantaloon and Columbine are the only Italian types of pantomime surviving to-day, and each has been thoroughly transfigured. In Italy they are to be found only in the lesser theatres or among the marionettes.

A propos of the witty pantomime of M. Chaumpfleury that was performed at the Funambules, M. Théophile Gautier writes as follows:—

> "Pantomime is the true *comédie humaine*, and although it does not employ two thousand characters like that of M. de Balzac, it is no less complete. With four or five types, it suffices for everything. Cassandre [*i.e.* Pantaloon] represents the family; Léandre, the stupid and wealthy fop, favoured by parents; Columbine, the ideal; Béatrix, the dream pursued, the flower of youth and of beauty; Harlequin, with the face of an ape and the sting of a serpent, with his black mask, his many-coloured lozenges, his shower of spangles, represents love, wit, mobility, audacity, all the showy and vicious qualities; Pierrot, pallid, slender, dressed in sad colours, always hungry and always beaten is the ancient slave, the modern proletarian, the pariah, the passive and disinherited being, who, glum and sly, witnesses the orgies and the follies of his masters."

None must expect to find here a history of the Italian theatre;

we shall make no mention of the mystery play, which, in Italy and in Europe, was essentially religious throughout the Middle Ages, nor of the academic and classic drama and comedy, which, from the fifteenth century onwards, amused the courts of the Italian princes. Nor yet shall we occupy ourselves with the serious dramas and comedies, in verse or in music, performed in Italy in later times, and largely derived from the modern French theatre. Our researches are concerned only with that which sets forth the real character of Italy; with that art *sui generis* which is only to be found there, the impromptu comedy begotten of the Atellanæ, the masks full of originality, the buffoons full of wit and spontaneity, as much at their ease in the public square as in the Court of Versailles; it is in short of these *Commedianti dell' Arte*, and of their successors along the same road, that we are going to attempt to disclose the history and to trace the types with the aid of our drawings, given to the light—as was said of old, in speaking of engravings—by our friend Alexandre Manceau.

I

HARLEQUIN

"Sirs, I was born in Bergamo, but so long ago that I remember nothing of it. I was called in those days—— Ah, but wait! . . . I can no longer remember my name, by Bacchus! Forgive me if I appeal to Bacchus, but he is the only god whom I ever take to witness.

"Sirs, I was well acquainted of old with one Maccus, whose temper was not always amiable, and it also happened that I had more wit than that coarse brute. Later I was lackey to a doctor who in reality was but an apothecary, and so miserly that for clothes he gave me no more than such old rags of his own as could no longer be employed to repair less seedy ones. I endured a noble poverty, and for long. You are looking at my hat! It is almost new. It was given to me by Henry III. He did not care about hats; he gave me one that proved too small for his monkish head. This rabbit's tail is the emblem of his courage and of mine; not the courage of the lamb, but the courage of the hare, to run quickly and long.

"I was very naïve, not to say stupid, my masters; but with age, experience and wit came to my assistance, and to-day I have all that I need and some to spare. I said to myself at first, when I left my old apothecary, that I should be well advised to imitate my brother Brighella—that is to say, to find myself a situation where one may eat well. Therefore I chose hostelries. But, alas! if shoemakers are the worst shod, eating-house lackeys are the worst nourished. I abandoned that profession and became a soldier; a poor condition, believe me; later I turned comedian, tumbler, dancer, merry-andrew and mountebank at one and the same time. But, perceiving that my rags did not make a good impression at Court, I bought new cloth of all colours, red, yellow, blue, to replace the tattered pieces of my little garment, the like of which is not to be seen at present within a thousand leagues. On Sundays and holidays I put on my satin clothes; but they wear out too quickly and are too dear. And the fact is—must I confess it sirs?—I never have a halfpenny. That, however, does not prevent me from being gay, or from being pleasing to beauty; upon waiting-maids, now, I exert a peculiar attraction. I understand perfectly how to contrive certain delicate love affairs into which fathers, husbands and guardians have no business to be thrusting their noses. I am, for the moment, a lackey of condition to some young people, whose purse is not always quite as empty as their brains. In short, whilst waiting to transact my own affairs I transact those of others, and I will say with my old friend Polichinelle: 'I am as good as many another!'

"I contrive so well that I now go to Court; I am the Marquis of Sbruffadeli; I overlook the waiting-maids; I court their mistresses, and I aspire to the hand of Isabella. . . .

"But what is that? Who strikes me? Ah me! Where shall I hide myself? I cry you mercy, my master! I will restore you your garments. Do not beat me to death; let me die of old age! I resume my rags, my bat and my mask; I return to Columbine, and I shall avenge myself upon Pierrot."

HARLEQUIN

The Greeks represented and put upon the stage all the inhabitants of the earth then known to them, and the members of all classes of society: Greek citizens, merchants of Tyre, Persian wizards and sorcerers, foreign doctors, Egyptian priests, Chaldean astronomers, Macedonian soldiers, Scythian barbers; pedants, parasites, matrons, young girls, courtesans of Lesbos or of Athens, peasants and Asiatic or African slaves. Among these last we find an actor dressed now in the skin of a goat, now in the skin of a tiger, variegated in colour, which clung tightly to his body, armed with only a wooden staff, his head shaved, and covered by a white hat, his face by a brown mask; he was called by the vulgar the young satyr. Could this be the first Harlequin?

In an article on Harlequin, Marmontel writes, in 1776:

"This is at one and the same time the most bizarre and the most amusing character in the theatre. A Bergamese negro is an absurdity. It is probable that an African negro was the first model of the character."

The Sycionians, with whom the mimes were as ancient as with the Athenians, preserved the name of phallophores for their public phallic singers. These Sycionian phallophores wore no mask, they besmeared their countenances with soot. *fuligine faciem obductam*, or covered their faces with papyrus bark—that is to say, with a paper mask—to represent foreign slaves. They advanced rhythmically, from the side or back of the theatre, and their first words were always:

"Bacchus! Bacchus! Bacchus! It is to thee, Bacchus, that we consecrate these airs. We shall adorn their simple rhythm by varied songs which were not made for virgins. We do not repeat old songs; the hymn which we address to thee has never yet been sung."

In Rome these same phallophores take the name of *planipes*. This name comes to them from the fact that having no need for the high tragic buskin to increase their size—since they performed quite close to the public on the thymele in the orchestra itself—they played, as it were, flat-footed. These actors performed only little pieces and improvisations of the Atellane farces.

"*Quid enim si choragium thymelicum possiderem? num ex eo argumentare etiam uti me consuesse trageodi syrmate, histrionis crocata, mimi centunculo*," says Apuleius in his apology.

Mimi centunculo indicates the garb of Harlequin, composed as it is of an infinity of pieces of various colours. His black mask is described by *fuligine faciem obductam*, and his shaven head, according to Vossius, by *Sanniones mimum agebant rasis capitibus* (the buffoons performed in their pantomimes with shaven heads).

Harlequin and Brighella are called in Italy *zanni*, *zani* or *sanni*, from the Latin *sannio*, a buffoon, a mocker; *sannium*, *sanna*, mockery, raillery, grimace.

"I have sought," says Riccoboni (in his *History of the Italian Theatre*), "the origin of this name of *zanni*, and I think that it is a change in the first letter that has given rise to doubt. We see that our predecessors very often used Z in the place of S. All the most approved Italian authors have said *zambuco* for *sambuco*, *zampogna* for *sampogna*, *zanna* for *sanna*.

"'*Quid enim potest tam ridiculum quam* sannio *esse? qui* *ore, vultu, imitandis motibus, voce, denique corpore ridetur ipso?*' (Cicero, *De Oratore*, lib. ii.)

"'*Planipes graece dicitur mimus, ideo autem latine planipes quod actores planis pedibus, id est, nudi proscenium introirent*' (Diomed. lib. iii.)

"Is not the footgear of Harlequin indicated there? His foot is simply enveloped in a piece of leather without a heel. From top to toe, then, the dress of Harlequin is precisely that of the Latin mime. I have found a book which, whilst not being as ancient as I might have desired, yet contains enough to show the difference between the costume in those days and the present one.

". . . In the time of Henry IV. a troupe of Italian comedians came to Paris. The Harlequin of this troupe sought to induce the king to present him with a gold chain and a medal. He conceived the notion of writing a book, of printing it, and addressing it to the king. On the front page there is a figure of Harlequin of the height of some three inches."

The costume of this Harlequin which Riccoboni has engraved consists of a jacket open in front, and laced with shabby ribbons, and skin-tight trousers, covered with pieces of cloth of various colours, placed haphazard. The jacket is similarly patched. He wears a stiff black beard, a black half mask, a slashed cap, in the fashion of the time of François I. and no linen; he is equipped with a girdle, a pouch and a wooden sword; his feet are shod in very small slippers, covered at the ankle by the trouser, which acts as a gaiter.

As for the mask with which Harlequin appeared in France, and which he wears still to-day, it is said that it was Michel-

Angelo who restored it him, copying it from the mask of an ancient satyr. His costume in the seventeenth century, like his character, underwent a metamorphosis; we still find him arrayed in the same pieces of cloth of different colours, but henceforward they are symmetrically placed.

From the time of Domenico, who was the transformer of this type, the costume has changed but very little. The jacket has grown, little by little, whilst the trousers have shrunk, returning to their primitive form. Lozenges of different colours have lengthened; but the mask, the chin-piece, the black head, the rabbit tail—emblem of poltroonery—the bat and the girdle, have remained such as they always were.

That rabbit's tail which adorns the head of Harlequin is a further tradition of antiquity. It was the custom to attach the tail of a fox or the ears of a hare to those upon whom it was sought to draw ridicule.

An innovation lies in the spangles which render the modern Harlequin a sort of streaming fish in gold and silver scales.

In the first Italian troupes of the sixteenth century—nomad troupes which derived as much from the Bohemians and the mountebanks as from the comedians—we find Trivelino, Mestolino, Zaccagnino, Truffaldino, Guazeto and Bagatino, who are of the same type under various names, and often under the same costume. It was not until Henry III. that a zany of this type appeared in Paris.

It has been pretended that as this zany was without doubt protected by the first president of Parliament, Achille de Harlay, his comrades came to call him Harlequino, meaning thereby the little protégé of Harlay. This name remained to him and to his successors in the type. But its etymology is victoriously refuted in an interesting passage of the learned commentators of Rabelais, Johanneau and Esmangard:

"Donat informs us that the procurers (*lenones*) in the ancient comedies were dressed in variegated costumes, no doubt after the manner of Mercury their patron, which persuades us that that character in comedy which we call Harlequin, is none other than Mercury, this being the reason why he is given a variegated costume, made up of pieces of different colours. Harlequin is a diminutive of *harle*, or *herle*, the name of an aquatic bird, and not a derivative of that of M. de Harlay or of Hercules. In Italy he is called Harlequino; in the antichopin he is called Harlequinus, and in a letter of Raulin in 1521 Herlequinus."

"Harlequin's performance down to the seventeenth century" (says Riccoboni) "consisted of just a series of extravagant capers, of violent movements and of outrageous blackguardisms. He was at once insolent, mocking, clownish and, above all, obscene. I think that with all this he mingled an agility of body which made him appear to be always in the air, and I might add with assurance that he was an acrobat."

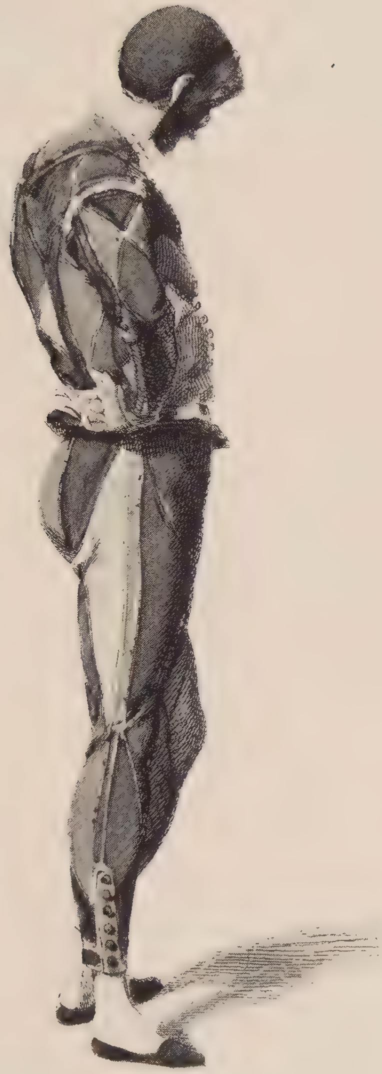
Our modern Harlequin is, above all, a dancer and a tumbler, in which he is in affinity with the most ancient type.

In the background of some of his drawings Callot shows us several Harlequins who are leaping and dancing and turning backward somersaults. So that in Callot's day Harlequin was still a dancer.

Nevertheless, from 1560 onwards, we see Harlequin, the native of Bergamo, shedding some of the stupidity that had characterised him until then. He still remains a glutton, and he is always a poltroon, but he is no longer that type of farm servant from the neighbourhood of Bergamo, seeking everywhere for the donkey upon which he was mounted.

"His character," says Marmontel, "presents a mixture of ignorance, naïveté, stupidity and grace. He is like a mere sketch of a man, a great child visited by flashes of reason and intelligence, in all of whose capers and awkwardnesess there is something sharp and interesting. The model Harlequin is all suppleness and agility, with the grace of a young cat, yet equipped with a superficial coarseness that renders his performances more amusing; the rôle is that of a lackey, patient, faithful, credulous, gluttonous, always in love, always in difficulties either on his master's account or on his own, afflicting himself and consoling himself again with the readiness of a child, one whose sorrows are as amusing as his joys. Such a part demands a great deal of naturalness and of wit, and a great deal of physical grace and suppleness."

At the time that the zany Arlecchino was a fool, Brighella, the other Bergamese, was sly and astute. Harlequin and Brighella are both from the town of Bergamo. This town is built like an amphitheatre on the hills between the Brembo and the Serio in their courses from the Valtelline hills. It is said that the inhabitants of the upper and lower town are entirely different in character. Those of the upper town, personified in the character of Brighella, are lively, witty and active; those of the lower town are idle, ignorant and almost entirely stupid, like Harlequin. I crave the pardon of the inhabitants of the lower town for this statement, made upon the



assumption that, like Harlequin himself, they also have become, since the sixteenth century, as lively and as witty as their compatriots of the upper town. It is said in the north of Italy that Harlequin the imbecile had over his left eye a wart which covered the half of his cheek, and that it was for this reason that he assumed the mask, which he has retained ever since.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century Harlequin, whilst adhering to his leaping movements, and his cat-like manner, becomes less simple, as we have said, and from time to time even goes so far as to permit himself a certain wisdom. It was in this manner that in 1578 the character was played in Italy by Simone of Bologna.

But it was in the seventeenth century that the rôle of Harlequin was completely transformed by Domenico Biancolelli, a man of merit, well informed, and the friend of literary men, who bestowed his own wit upon the character. Thus Harlequin became witty, astute, an utterer of quips and something of a philosopher. Even in the Italian troupes the actors who played the part under the names of Zaccagnino and of Truffaldino modelled their performances upon those of Domenico.

ii

Giuseppe-Domenico Biancolelli was born in Bologna in 1640. His father and mother were comedians in a company established in that city, and from his earliest infancy Biancolelli played with them in comedy, and made such rapid progress that at the age at which men are usually considering a career he was already counted amongst the good actors of Italy.

In 1659 Cardinal Mazarin, desiring to increase his Italian company, sent for several actors, including Biancolelli, who was then performing at Vienna in the troupe of Tabarini. This Tabarini had already been in France during the reign of Louis XIII. and the minority of Louis XIV. In response to the cardinal's summons, then, young Biancolelli went to France in the following year, together with Eularia, Diamantina and Ottavio.

At the time an actor named Locatelli was playing the rôles of Trivelino, a sort of Harlequin, in the company which Biancolelli went to recruit, This, however, did not hinder Biancolelli from playing Harlequin, as second comic, alongside of Trivelino, until the death of the latter in 1671. From that moment the stage was dominated by Domenico, as he was generally known. He acquired the reputation of being the greatest actor of his century, and rendered popular the name of Arlecchino. He died at forty-eight of pneumonia contracted whilst dancing before Louis XIV.

"The Sieur Beauchamp, dancing master to Louis XIV. and composer of his ballet, had performed before his Majesty a very singular and greatly applauded dance in a divertissement which the Italian comedians had attached to one of their pieces. Domenico, who danced very well, gave forthwith an extremely comical imitation of Beauchamp's dance. The king manifested so much delight in these parodying capers that Domenico persisted in them for as long as it was physically possible to him. He was so overheated that, being unable to change his linen upon leaving the stage (because he had to return to it immediately in his own rôle), he caught a severe chill which ended in pneumonia. He lay ill for only eight days, when, after having *renounced the theatre*, he died on Monday the 2nd of August, 1688, at six o'clock in the evening, and was buried at Saint-Eustache, behind the choir, opposite to the chapel of the Virgin. He dwelt in the Rue Montmartre near the old Hôtel Charôt."

The loss of Domenico was a shattering thunderbolt upon the Italian comedy. His comrades closed the theatre for a month, and when they reopened it they put up the following announcement:—

"We have long marked our sorrow by our silence, and we should prolong it further if the apprehension of displeasing you did not influence us more profoundly than our legitimate pain. We shall reopen our theatre on Wednesday next, the 1st of September 1688. In the impossibility of repairing the loss we have sustained, we offer you of the best that our application and our care is able to supply. Bear us a little indulgence, and be assured that we shall omit nothing that will contribute to your pleasure."

Domenico had married in Paris, in 1662, Orsola Corteze, who played under the name of Eularia. She bore him twelve children, five of whom survived him. They were:

Françoise Biancolelli, born in 1664, who played the rôles of Isabella;

Catherine Biancolelli, born in 1665, who played the rôles of Columbine;

Louis Biancolelli, knight of Saint-Louis, captain of the royal regiment of marines, military engineer, and director of the forts of Provence, who died at Toulon in 1729; he was a godson of Louis XIV., and the author of several pieces played at the Comédie-Italienne, and included in Gherardi's collection;

Philippe Biancolelli de Bois-Morand, born in 1672, king's councillor, elder councillor to Saint-Domingue, and marine commissioner;

Pierre-François Biancolelli, born in 1681, who, under the name of Dominique, played Trivelino parts at the Comédie-Italienne, and in forain theatres, and who died in 1734.

Anecdotes abound concerning the famous Domenico. It is related of him that being present one night at a royal supper he fixed his eyes upon a certain dish of partridges. Louis XIV., observing this glance of his, said to a lackey:

"Let this dish be given to Domenico."

"And the partridges also?" inquired Domenico.

"And the partridges also," replied the king, appreciating this readiness of wit. The dish was of gold.

Louis XIV. returning one day from a hunting expedition went incognito to attend the performance of an Italian piece that was being given at Versailles.

"That is a bad piece," he said to Domenico, as he was leaving.

"Whisper it," replied Arlecchino, "because if the king were to hear you he would dismiss me together with my troupe."

Domenico was of short stature and comely face, but some ten years before his death he had become rather too stout for the part of Harlequin. At the foot of his portrait painted by Ferdinand, and engraved by Hubert, the following quatrain is to be read :—

> “ Bologne est ma patrie et Paris mon séjour,
> J’y règne avec éclat sur la scène comique ;
> Arlequin sous le masque y cache Dominique,
> Qui réforme en riant et le peuple et la cour. ”

After Domenico’s death a book was published by Florentin Delaulne bearing the following title :—*Arlequiniana, or the Quips and Pleasant and Amusing Stories culled from the Conversations of Harlequin*, 1694.

The work begins thus :

“ On Saturday last, the 30th of the month, as I was leaving my room on the stroke of midnight, Harlequin appeared before me. He was wearing his little hat, his mask and the coat in which he performed. At first I was surprised to see him ; but I was at once reassured, being persuaded that I had nothing to fear from a man for whom my affections had survived his death.

“ ‘ Do not be apprehensive,’ he said to me ; ‘ I am charmed to see you.’

“ Thereupon I ran to embrace him.

“ ‘ No, not that,’ he said, ‘ my body is now no more than abstract matter, ill calculated to receive such marks of your friendship. What folly induced you to publish things uttered between us when I was alive ? Do you think to gladden the world with my stories ? Was I so well known that my name should not yet be forgotten ? ’ etc.”

The author answers him that his name is immortal, that his person is beloved and esteemed throughout Europe ; that in the rôles which he undertook he never played other than with justice and honesty.

"When you portrayed the knaveries of the practitioners, the distortions of women, the trickiness of bankrupts, or the impertinences of the bourgeois, do you think to have done them any harm?"

The conversation continues thus between the author and the deceased Domenico throughout the volume. Into this conversation are brought amusing stories, scandalous anecdotes of the time, quips, facetiæ, moralisings, philosophic dissertations, etc. It is a pot-pourri on the subject of Domenico.

In one of the comedies played by Domenico Harlequin seeks to sell his house. Having found a buyer, he protests that as he does not wish him to buy a pig in a poke he will show him a sample of the goods, and he produces from under his jacket a large piece of plaster.

In another scene Harlequin appears as a beggar. Ottavio questions him upon various matters; amongst other things he asks him how many fathers he possesses.

"I have only one," replies Harlequin.

"But how does it happen that you have only one father?" demands Ottavio, losing patience.

"What would you?" is the answer. "I am but a poor man, and I have no means of affording more."

Elsewhere Pasquariello seeks to lead Harlequin to a tavern; but in this piece Harlequin is of sober habits, and replies: "The glass is Pandora's box; out of it come all the evils."

Let us cite a few further traits of the character drawn by Domenico in the various Harlequins performed by him.

Mezzetin promises Harlequin that he shall wed Columbine if he will second him in a fresh piece of knavery. Whilst Mezzetin is considering his project, Harlequin counts the buttons of his doublet, and at each button says: "I shall have Columbine, I shall not have her; I shall have her, I shall not have her; I shall have her, I shall not have her; I shall have her, I shall not have her; I shall have her, I shall not have her; (*he bursts into tears*) I shall not have her!"

Mezzetin. What ails you? Why are you crying?

Harlequin (*weeping*). I shall not have Columbine! hi! hi! hi!

Mezzetin. Who has said so?

Harlequin (*indicating his buttons*). Buttonomancy!

In *L'Homme à Bonnes Fortunes*, Harlequin, disguised as a marquis, is the recipient of many presents from women whom he has contrived to please. He has already received and donned two dressing-gowns, when a third one is brought to him on behalf of a widow who comes to judge for herself of the effect produced by her present. There is a knock at the door. It is she. Harlequin has no more than time to slip this third gown over the other two, whereby he is given the appearance of an elephant. The widow enters, notwithstanding that admission has been refused her.

Harlequin (*angrily*). Morbleu, madam! Did I not bid them tell you that I was not visible to-day?

The Widow. To find you, sir, it is necessary to come upon you as you leave your bed; throughout the remainder of the day you are unapproachable.

HARLEQUIN. It is true that I have not an hour to myself. I am so exhausted by these adventures which the vulgar call *bonnes fortunes* that my superfluity would be enough for twenty idlers of the Court.

THE WIDOW. But, sir, I find you very fat. What is the matter with you?

HARLEQUIN. Nothing, merely that I overate last night at supper.

THE WIDOW. There must be some other reason; are you perhaps dropsical?

HARLEQUIN. Indeed no!

THE WIDOW. Let us see. (*She pulls off his dressing-gowns, one after the other.*)

HARLEQUIN (*defending himself*). Fie, madam! What are you about? This isn't decent!

THE WIDOW. One, two, three dressing-gowns! That is to say, three mistresses! Ah! Traitor! It is thus, then, that you betray me! And you say that you love none but me!

HARLEQUIN (*attempting to seek refuge in the wardrobe*). Madam, I can bear no more!

THE WIDOW. Now I know the worth of your oaths.

HARLEQUIN. Madam, I must go. . . . If I don't——

THE WIDOW. Rascal!

HARLEQUIN. Madam, I can no longer answer for the discretion of——

THE WIDOW. Are you shameless? I will have no more to do with you. Return me the dressing-gown. (*She attempts to drag her dressing-gown from him; they fight,* HARLEQUIN *knocks off her headdress, she loses one of her petticoats, and departs.*)

On the subject of the etymology of the name of Harlequin, it is explained thus by Domenico:

CINTHIO (*to his lackey,* HARLEQUIN). By the way, since you have been in my employ it has never occurred to me to inquire your name?

Harlequin. I am called Arlecchino Sbrufadelli.

(*At the name of Sbrufadelli* Cinthio *bursts into laughter.*)

Harlequin. Do not presume to mock me. All my ancestors were people of consequence. Sbroufadel, the first of the name, was a pork butcher, but so superior in his profession that Nero would eat no sausages but those which he made. Of Sbroufadel was born Fregocola, a great captain ; he married Mademoiselle Castagna, who was of so lively a temperament that she gave birth to me two days after the wedding. My father was delighted, but his joy was cut short by certain pettifoggeries on the part of the police. Whenever my father met an honest man on the highway he never failed to take off his hat, and if it happened to be night, he would take off his cloak as well. The police sought to curb this excess of civility and ordered his arrest. My father did not wait for it. He took me in my swaddling clothes, and, having thrust me into a cauldron, and the rest of his movables into a basket, he left the city, driving before him the donkey that bore his house and his heir. He frequently struck the beast to cries of "Ar ! Ar !" which in the asinine language means "Get on ! get on !" Whilst proceeding thus, he perceived that a man was following him. This man, observing that my father was considering him attentively, hid himself, crouching (*se messe chin*) behind a bush. My father, who took him for the officer sent to arrest him, conceiving that he assumed this position the better to surprise him, beat his donkey more severely than ever, crying *Ar ! le chin*, that is to say : Get on, he is crouching. So that, as I was still without a name, my father, remembering the fright which he had received, and the words *Ar ! le chin, Ar ! le chin*, which he had repeated so often, called me Arlechino.

In another Italian scene we see Pasquariello giving advice to Harlequin, who is in difficulties on the subject of finding a good profession.

Pasquariello. Set up as a doctor. If fortune smiles on you you'll soon be rich. Consider how much the doctor has earned since he has been in fashion to treat gout. He has amassed more than two hundred thousand francs, and he knows no more about the gout than you do.

Harlequin. Then of necessity he must know very little, for I know nothing.

Pasquariello. That should not hinder you from being a clever doctor.

Harlequin. Parbleu, you mock me! I can neither read nor write.

Pasquariello. No matter, I say. It is not knowledge that makes the successful doctor, it is impudence and wordiness.

Harlequin. But how, then, do they manage with their patients?

Pasquariello. I will tell you. You begin by having a mule and promenading through Paris on it. First comes a man who says: "Sir doctor, I beg of you to come and see my parent who is ill." "Willingly, sir." The man goes ahead and the doctor follows on his mule. (*Here* Pasquariello *imitates the man who walks; he turns round and says to* Harlequin *who follows him trotting*): What are you playing at?

Harlequin. I am playing the mule.

Pasquariello. You arrive at the house of the sick man. Your guide knocks, the door is opened, the doctor alights from his mule and together they ascend the staircase.

Harlequin. And the mule? Does the mule also ascend the staircase?

Pasquariello. No, no, the mule remains at the door, it is the man and the doctor who ascend the staircase. Behold them now in the patient's antechamber. The man says to the doctor, "Follow me, sir, I am going to see if my parent sleeps." (*Here* Pasquariello *walks on tiptoe, stretches out his arms, and pretends to draw aside the curtains of a bed.*)

Harlequin. Why do you step so softly?

Pasquariello. On account of the sick man. We are now in his chamber, beside the bed. "Sir, the patient is not asleep, you may approach." Immediately the doctor takes the armchair by the bedside, and says to the patient: "Show me your tongue." (PASQUARIELLO *puts out an enormous tongue and, imitating the patient, says* :) " Oh, sir, I am very ill ! "

HARLEQUIN (*considering* PASQUARIELLO'S *tongue*). Eh ! what an ugly illness !

PASQUARIELLO. That tongue is very dry and very heated.

HARLEQUIN. It must be put on ice.

PASQUARIELLO. Let us feel the pulse. (*He pretends to feel the pulse of the sick man.*) Now here is a pulse that goes devilishly quick ! Let us feel the stomach. Now here is a stomach that is very hard.

HARLEQUIN. Perhaps he has swallowed iron.

PASQUARIELLO. Let me have paper, pen and ink. (*He pretends to write.*) Recipe : this evening a *lavement*, to-morrow morning a blood-letting, and to-morrow evening a medicine. (*All this is mimed by* PASQUARIELLO *as if he were administering a* lavement, *or a blood-letting, or swallowing a medicine.*) Then you take your leave of the patient, and you depart saying, " Sir, to-morrow I shall come at the same hour, and I hope in a short time to restore you completely to health." Then the man who has introduced you reconducts you again, and slips a golden half-louis into your hand ; you mount your mule once more and depart.

HARLEQUIN. But how may I be able to guess whether he has the fever or not ?

PASQUARIELLO. I will show you. When the pulse is equal, that is to say when it goes tac, tac, tac, there is no fever, but when it is intermittent, and when it goes quickly, ti, ta, ta ; ti, ta, ta ; ti, ta, ta, there is fever.

HARLEQUIN. Now that is quite simple : tac, tac, tac, no fever ; ti, ta, ta ; ti, ta, ta ; ti, ta, ta, fever.

PASQUARIELLO. There you are, as learned as the doctors ; let us go.

HARLEQUIN. Ti, ta, ta ; ti, ta, ta ; I am all for ti, ta, ta.

Harlequin, having become a doctor, prescribes as follows for the Captain, who has asked him for a remedy for toothache. " Take," says Harlequin, " some pepper, garlick and vinegar, and rub your back with them; that will make you forget your pain."

As the Captain is about to depart, Harlequin calls him back. "Sir, sir," says he, "I was forgetting the best; take an apple, cut it into four equal parts, put one of these in your mouth, and then thrust your head into an oven until the apple is baked, and I will answer for it that your toothache will be entirely cured."

In the very curious pictures possessed by the Théâtre-Français, bearing the inscription in gold letters: "*Farceurs françois et italiens, depuis soixante ans*," we find Domenico in his costume of Harlequin together with several other Italian types — Brighella, Scaramouche, the Doctor, Pantaloon, Mezzetin, Matamoros—mingling with the French types: Turlupin, Gros-Guillaume, Gaultier-Garguille, Guillot-Gorju, Jodelet, Gros-René and Molière.

iii

In 1689 Evaristo Gherardi took up and continued the performances of the rôles of Harlequin. He was the son of Giovanni Gherardi, born at Prato, in Tuscany. He made his first appearance in the revival of *Divorce*, in the rôle of Harlequin created by Domenico in the preceding year. Here is what he himself has to say of it:

"This comedy had not succeeded in the hands of M. Domenico. It had been struck out of the catalogue of the plays which were revived from time to time, and the parts had been burnt. Nevertheless (notwithstanding that I had never been on the stage in my life, and that I had but left the college of La Marche, where I had just concluded my course of philosophy, under the learned M. Bublé), I chose it for my first appearance, which took place on the 1st of October 1689. The piece was so successful in my hands that it gave pleasure to everyone, was extraordinarily well attended, and consequently earned a great deal of money for the company.

"If I were the man to derive vanity from the theatrical talents which nature has given me, either with face uncovered or under a mask, in the leading serious or comic rôles, I should have in this the most ample grounds upon which to flatter my self-love. I should say that I did more in my beginnings and in my first years than the most illustrious actors have been able to do after twenty years of experience, and in the full prime of their lives. But I protest that very far from having ever become elated by these rare advantages, I have always considered them to be the results of my good fortune, rather than the consequences of my merits; and if anything has been able to flatter my soul in this connection, it is the pleasure of seeing myself universally applauded after the inimitable M. Domenico, who went so far in the expression of the naïveté—that which the Italians call *goffagine*—of the character of Harlequin, that all those who witnessed his performances must always find some fault with the most famous Harlequin of any later day."

It will be seen that Gherardi praises himself quite naïvely. It is true that this self-praise was not exaggerated, that he had great talents, and that he was attended by constant success until the theatre was closed in 1697. He hoped to bring about its reopening by his protectors at Court; but in this he was disappointed. He then produced a very interesting collection of the memorised French scenes, which were frequently interpolated into the Italian scenarii.

Some months before the publication of this collection, in the course of a show given at Saint-Maur, with Poisson and la Thorillière, Gherardi happened to fall upon his head. He neglected to have his hurt properly cared for, and on the very day on which he had been to present his book to Monseigneur he was holding between his knees his son (borne him by Elizabeth Danneret) when he had a seizure, and suddenly expired. That was on the 31st of August 1700.

"Il n'était ni bien ni mal fait,
Grand ni petit, plus gras que maigre.
Il avait le corps fort allègre,
Le front haut, l'œil faible, mais vif.
Le nez très-significatif.
Et qui promettait des merveilles.
La bouche atteignait les oreilles.
Son teint était d'homme de feu ;
Son menton se doublait un peu ;
Son encolure, assez petite
Le menaçait de mort subite."

From an engraved portrait he resembles this description but little. His forehead is high, it is true, but his eyes are very large and lively, his nose aquiline and sensitive, his mouth small and well formed, and not a gash from ear to ear; the jaw is strongly outlined. In short, it presents a very intelligent countenance, full of finesse, advertising a lively and caustic spirit.

Here are some passages from the book of Gherardi—that is to say, from the scenes collected and performed by him :

HARLEQUIN

DESPAIR OF HARLEQUIN IN *L'EMPEREUR DANS LA LUNE*

HARLEQUIN. Ah! unfortunate that I am! The doctor wants to marry Columbine to a farmer, and how can I live without Columbine? I shall die. O ignorant doctor! O inconstant Columbine! O knavish farmer! O extremely miserable Harlequin! Let me hasten to die. It shall be written in ancient and modern history: "Harlequin died for Columbine." I shall go to my chamber; I shall attach a rope to a beam; I shall get upon a chair; I shall fit the rope round my neck; I shall kick away the chair; and behold me hanged! (*Mimicry of hanging.*) It is done; nothing can stop me; let us hasten to the hanging crutch. . . .

"To the hanging crutch? Fie, sir, you must not think of it. To kill yourself for a girl! It were a great folly. . . ."

"Yes, sir; but for a girl to betray an honest man is a great wickedness. . . ."

"I agree; but when you shall have hanged yourself shall you be any fatter?"

"No, I shall be thinner; I desire a slender shape! What have you to say to that? If you want to join me you have but to come. . . ."

"Oh! as for that, no; you are not going. . . ."

"Oh! but I am. . . ."

"Oh! no, you are not. . . ."

"But I *am* going, I tell you." (*He draws his sword, strikes himself and then exclaims*:) "There! I am rid of that tiresome fellow. Now that there is no one to interfere with me I will go hang myself." (*He makes as if to depart, and then stops short.*) "Ah! but no! To hang is a very ordinary death, the sort of death one sees every day; there is no glory in it. Let us seek some extraordinary death, some heroic death, some Harlequinic death." (*He considers.*) "I have it! I will stop up my mouth and my nose, so that the air may not pass through and thus I shall die. Behold, it is done." (*He stops his nose and mouth with both hands, and, after remaining thus for some time he says*:) "No; the air still escapes; it is not worth while. Alas! what a trouble to die! Sirs, if any amongst you would be so good as to die, so as to afford me a model, I should be infinitely obliged. . . . Faith, I have it! We read in history that there are people who have been killed by laughter. I am most sensitive to tickling; if some one were to tickle me for long they would make me die of laughter. I shall go and tickle myself, and thus I shall die." (*He tickles himself, laughs and falls down.*)

In the same piece, a few scenes later, he goes to visit the Doctor, and announces himself as Colin, the farmer's son who is to marry Columbine. The Doctor is his dupe until the arrival of the carrier, who announces that the farmer's son is ill and cannot come. The Doctor turns upon Harlequin, eyeing him from top to toe, and says to him: "You are not Colin!"

"Forgive me, sir," replies Harlequin, "I thought I was."

Chagrined at not yet having succeeded, he seeks a new way to obtain Columbine. He runs backwards and forwards across the stage until he is out of breath, when he exclaims: "Will some one of his charity inform me which is the residence of Doctor Grazian Balouard?" (*He puts his hand to his mouth and imitates the sound of a trumpet*). "Pu, pu, pu! Doctor Balouard, a doctor at fifteen sous!"

THE DOCTOR (*aside*). What is the meaning of this? (*To* HARLEQUIN.) Doctor Grazian Balouard? He is here, sir; what do you want with him?

HARLEQUIN. Oh! sir, you are choicely found. Address me your best compliments and bows. I am ambassador extraordinary, envoy from the emperor of the world of the Moon, and I am come to ask of you the hand of Isabella in marriage.

THE DOCTOR. Address yourself to others, my friend. I am not so easily taken in. An emperor in the moon! (*Aside.*) Yet such a thing might be possible; since the moon is a world like ours, presumably there must be some one to govern it. (*To* HARLEQUIN.) Are you really from that country, my friend?

HARLEQUIN. No, sir, I am neither from that country nor from this country. I am an Italian of Italy, at your service, born a native of the city of Prato, one of the most charming cities in all Tuscany.

THE DOCTOR. But how, then, did you contrive to ascend to the world of the moon ?

HARLEQUIN. I will tell you. We had arranged a party—three of my friends and I—to go and eat a goose at Vaugirard. I was deputed by the company to go and buy the goose. I transported myself to the Valley of Misery ; I there made my purchase, and I was wending my way thence to the rendezvous. As I was entering the plain of Vaugirard, behold ! six ravenous vultures came swooping down upon my goose, and carried it off. I, who feared to lose it, clung firmly to its neck, so that in a measure as the vultures carried up the goose they carried me up with it. When we had got very high, a further regiment of vultures came to the assistance of the first, hurled themselves upon my goose, and in an instant caused me to lose sight of the highest mountains and the highest steeples. I, obstinate always as the devil, would not let go. I hung on until the neck of my goose failed me, and I tumbled into a lake. Some fishermen, luckily, had spread their net, and I fell into it. The fishermen drew me out of the water, and, supposing me to be a fish of consequence, took me upon their shoulders, and bore me as a present to the emperor. Behold me lying on the ground and the emperor coming with all his court to view me. It is asked, "What sort of a fish is that." The emperor replies, "I think it is an anchovy." "Your pardon, Monseigneur," says a fat gentleman, who accounted himself witty, "rather is it a toad." "Anyway," said the emperor, "bid them fry me this fish such as it is." When I heard that they were going to fry me, I cried out : "But, Monseigneur . . ." "How," says he, "do fishes speak ? " Thereupon I assured him that I was not a fish, and further I informed him in what manner I had been brought to the Empire of the Moon. He asked me at once : "Are you acquainted with Doctor Grazian Balouard, and his daughter Isabella ? Then go and ask her of him in marriage on my behalf." But I replied, "I shall never be able to find my way there, because I do not know which way I came." "Do not let that embarrass you," he replied, "I shall send you to Paris by means of an influence that I am sending thither, laden with rheumatism, catarrhs, pneumonias and other little trifles of that kind." Further he said: "I reserve for the doctor one of the best places in my empire."

THE DOCTOR. Is it really possible? Did he tell you what it was?

HARLEQUIN. Indeed yes. He says that about a fortnight ago one of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, the Scorpion, died; and he wants to put you in its place.

The Doctor believes everything, asks a thousand questions concerning this lunar sovereign, inquires what like are the houses, the cities and the habits of life in the Court of that country. Harlequin gives him details of the manner in which the emperor eats. His food is shot at him from arbalists, and he is given to drink from a syringe. "It is very curious," says he. "One day an awkward arbalister missed the emperor's mouth and fired a buttered egg into his eye. Hence such eggs have ever since been called *œufs pochés*." After this he induces the Doctor to give him a purse and some jewels, and he departs, to return presently dressed as the Emperor of the Moon.

The Doctor addresses several questions to him concerning his empire and his subjects.

HARLEQUIN. My subjects? They are almost without defects, because they are governed solely by interest and ambition.

COLUMBINE. That is exactly as here.

HARLEQUIN. Everyone seeks to do the best he can for himself at the expense of his neighbour, and the highest virtue in my empire is to be wealthy.

THE DOCTOR. That is exactly as here.

HARLEQUIN. In my country there are no executioners; instead of dispatching people in a quarter of an hour on a scaffold, I hand them over to be killed by the doctors, who do them to death as cruelly as they do their patients.

Columbine. What, sir! Do the doctors up there also kill the people? That is exactly as here.

Isabella. And in your empire, sir, are there any wits?

Harlequin. My empire is the source of them. For over seventy years, now, we have been working upon a dictionary which will not be finished in two centuries.

Columbine. It is exactly as here. And is justice properly administered in your empire?

Harlequin. It is administered by hanging.

Isabella. And the judges, sir, do they not permit themselves to be corrupted?

Harlequin. Women there, as elsewhere, importune them. Sometimes presents are made to them; but in general they behave properly.

The Doctor. It is exactly as here. Sir, in your empire, are husbands accommodating?

Harlequin. That fashion arrived there almost as soon as in France. At the beginning we had a little trouble in making up our minds to it, but at present all the world is proud of it.

Columbine. It is exactly as here. . . . And the women in your empire, are they happy?

Harlequin. It is they who handle all the money and spend it all. The husbands have no concern save that of paying the taxes and repairing the houses.

Columbine. It is exactly as here.

Harlequin. Our women never rise until the afternoon. They invariably take three hours over their toilet; then they enter a coach and repair to the comedy, to the opera or to the promenade. Thence they go to sup with some chosen friend. After supper they play or they attend an opera, according to the season; and, towards four or five o'clock after midnight, they return home, so that a poor devil of a man may sometimes go for weeks without meeting his wife in the house, and you may see him hanging about the streets on foot, what time madam employs the coach for her pleasures.

All. It is exactly as here!

iv

When a new Italian troupe, summoned by the Regent, arrived in Paris, in 1716, Antonio Vicentini (styled Thomassin) made his first appearance in the rôle of Harlequin, supported by the entire troupe, on the 8th of May of that year, in the theatre of the Palais-Royal, in *L'Inganno Fortunato.*

"The famous Domenico, who had made himself so great a reputation in France, had a defect in his voice to which he had so thoroughly accustomed the public that it was never afterwards conceived that a Harlequin might be endurable who did not speak in his throat, and affect the tones of a parrot."

Riccoboni and Thomassin were very uneasy as to the manner in which the public would receive a new Harlequin, gifted with a clear and natural voice. There were several night-scenes in *L'Inganno Fortunato.* "One of these occurred at the commencement of the piece. Lelio called his lackey Harlequin, who at first did not answer, and who then answered at intervals, appearing to fall asleep again after each reply. Lelio went in quest of him, and dragged him on to the stage whilst still asleep though on his feet. Harlequin, awakened, answered and, then letting himself fall down, would drop off to sleep again. His master would awaken him once more. Harlequin would then go fast asleep upon his master's arm. The public were put in a good humour by this scene, and after having laughed and applauded for a quarter of an hour without the new Harlequin's having uttered a single word, they had not the courage to censure him upon his voice when at last they heard it."

Vicentini was born at Vicenza, and had long been playing in

Italy when Riccoboni made him offers to induce him to come to Paris. Marivaux wrote several pieces for Thomassin, amongst which were *La Surprise de l'Amour*, in 1722, and *Le Prince Travesti*, in 1724. It was no longer a question of improvisation, but of memorised comedy, and Harlequin's business was solely to get full value out of the author's wit. Marivaux, whilst preserving to this type his original colour, causes him to appear sometimes scintillant with wit, sometimes entirely stupid. He is a mixture of Sganarelle, Sancho Pança, Crispino and Figaro. In the *Prince Travesti*, Harlequin is the lackey of the Prince of Léon, who conceals his identity under the name of Lelio. He meets the Princess of Barcelone, who is in love with Lelio, and who puts questions to him on the subject of his master.

The Princess. What do you seek, Harlequin? Is your master in the palace?

Harlequin. Madam, I implore Your Principality to pardon the impertinence of my stupidity; had I but known of your presence here I should not have been so foolish as to have brought my person hither.

The Princess. You have done no harm. But tell me, are you seeking your master?

Harlequin. Exactly. You have guessed it, madam. Since he spoke to you a while ago I have lost him in this plaguey house and, saving your presence, I have lost myself also. If you would show me the way you would be doing me a kindness; there are here so many chambers that I have been travelling for an hour without coming to the end of them. *Par la mardi!* if you prize all this it must mean that it brings you a lot of money. Nevertheless, what a jumble of furniture, of oddities, and of kickshaws! A whole village might live a year upon the value of it all. . . . It is so beautiful that one does not dare to look at it; it instils fear into a poor man like me. How rich you are, you princes, and I, what is it that I am by comparison with this! But surely it is another impertinence on my part to reason with you as with an equal Your companion is laughing, perhaps I have said something foolish.

HORTENSE. You have said nothing foolish; on the contrary, you seem to me of an excellent wit.

HARLEQUIN. Pardi! I laugh always: what would you? I have nothing to lose. You amuse yourselves with being rich, you others, and I—I amuse myself with being gay; to every one his own amusement in this world.

With his master Harlequin shows himself to be no less critical and profound.

LELIO. I am disposed to confide in you that I am a person of condition, who amuse myself by travelling incognito. I am young; it is a study that will be useful to me some day.

HARLEQUIN. My faith, it is a study that will teach you nothing but poverty; it was hardly worth while to travel post for the sake of studying all this rubbish. What will you make of all this knowledge of men? You will learn but poor things.

LELIO. But they will cheat me no more.

HARLEQUIN. That will spoil you.

LELIO. Why?

HARLEQUIN. You will no longer be so kindly when you are learned on that subject. By dint of seeing so many scoundrels, in truth, you will become a scoundrel yourself. . . . Good-bye! Which is the way to the kitchen?

Comical scenes follow between Harlequin and Frederick, an ambitious courtier who seeks to seduce Harlequin. The latter thereupon becomes again the loutish lackey, opposing to Frederick's attack the ponderous and ingenious probity of the peasant.

HARLEQUIN. Pardi! You treat me like your own child.

There is no boggling at that. Wealth, employment, and a pretty girl; that means a whole shipload of victuals, money and delicacies. It is clear that you love me very dearly!

FREDERICK. Yes; your physiognomy pleases me; you are a good lad!

HARLEQUIN. Oh! as for that, I am as droll as a box; leave it to me and we shall laugh like mad together; but let us behold at once this wealth, these employments and this pretty girl, for I am in haste to be rich and at ease.

Frederick has a small service to ask of him. It is that of spying upon his master, and to report to him his words and actions. "Observe all very carefully, and as an earnest of the recompense ultimately to be yours, here is some money for you in advance.

HARLEQUIN. Can't you advance me the girl also? We will deduct her from the rest.

FREDERICK. A service, my child, is never paid for until it is rendered; that is the custom.

HARLEQUIN. A villainous custom! . . . I prefer to give you my note of hand to the effect that I have received this girl on account. . . . But, when I come to think of it, I am afraid you want me to do dirty work for you. What do you want with the words of my lord Lelio, my master?

FREDERICK. Mere curiosity.

HARLEQUIN. Hum. . . . There is malice under all this. You have a sly look. I will bet you ten sous that you are a worthless fellow. . . . Get along! you should not tempt a poor lad who has no more honour than is necessary to him, and who is fond of girls. I have all the trouble in the world to prevent myself from being a scoundrel. Must my honour be the ruin of me, to deprive me of wealth, employment and a pretty wench. *Par la mardi!* you are very wicked to have invented this girl.

FREDERICK. Consider that I am offering you your fortune, and that you are losing it.

HARLEQUIN. I am considering that your commission smells of trickery, and luckily this trickery fortifies my poor honour which was wavering. Bah! your pretty girl is no better than a drab; your employments are concerned with some dogs' traffic. That is my last word, and I am going straight to find the princess and my master to relate to them my disaster and all your proposals.

FREDERICK. Wretch! are you resolved then to dishonour me?

HARLEQUIN. Good! when one has no honour is it necessary to have reputation?

Thomassin would execute at times highly extraordinary turns of strength and of agility.

"He would run round the outside of the boxes of the first, second and third tiers; but the public, too deeply interested in the life of this amiable actor, compelled him to cut out a turn so dangerous which invariably had the effect of frightening the spectators far more than it amused them.

"His natural gaiety and the graces of his clowning would in themselves have sufficed to have charmed the public, even had not nature made him an excellent actor, which is to be taken in the widest sense of the term as meaning that he was natural, naïve, original and pathetic."

Amid the laughter excited by his buffoonery he would at times suddenly surprise his audience into tears. "Often, after beginning by laughing at the manner in which he expressed his pain, one ended by experiencing the emotion by which he was penetrated."

Like Domenico, in the matter of pupils, Thomassin produced only very bad copies, and "one saw nothing but pitiful attempts in the rôle of Harlequin" until the day when Carlo Bertinazzi came to succeed him.

Thomassin had married Margarita Rusca, who played waiting-woman parts under the name of Violetta. He died on the 19th of August 1739 at the age of fifty-seven, after a long illness. Among the many children he left and who have appeared on the Italo-French stage, the best known was Madame de Hesse, wife of the actor of this name.

On the 21st of November of 1739 Antonio Constantini, a brother of the celebrated Angelo Constantini, who had created the rôle of Mezzetin in Paris, made his first appearance in the part of Harlequin. He played "with great vivacity," and held out some hope that he would repair the loss which the theatre had sustained by the death of Thomassin ; he did not, however, fulfil this promise, and he was not accepted for the rôles of zany.

The feeble début of the Alsatian, Théodorak—anagram of Cadoret—in 1740, met with no better success.

> "It is altogether incredible what a number of Harlequins appeared within the space of three or four years ; they seemed to rise from the ashes of Thomassin : but, similar to those shadows which are formed from the exhalations of tombs, and which the least sound dissipates, so all these disappeared before the booings of the groundlings."

In 1741, Gioachino Vicentini, the youngest son of Thomassin, aged eighteen, made his début as Harlequin, on the 26th of August. "But, as talents are not always hereditary, he was not accepted at the Comédie-Italienne, and he confined himself thereafter to playing in the provinces."

In the same year the Sieur Molin also attempted the rôle of Harlequin with no better reception. He also repaired to the country.

V

At last, on the 10th of April 1741, Carlo Bertinazzi, born at Turin, 1713, made his début, and was received into the troupe in the month of August 1742, after having played with success the famous character of Harlequin for more than a year, and having surpassed the hopes which had been founded upon his talent. This brilliant début was thus chronicled in the *Mercure*:

"On Thursday, the 10th of April 1741, the Italian comedians opened their theatre with an Italian piece in prose and in three acts, in which the Sieur Carlin Bertinazzi, born at Turin, some twenty-eight years ago, performed for the first time the rôle of Harlequin, the principal character in the piece. The Sieur Richard, who had addressed the public on the closure of the theatre, addressed it again on the opening, and expressed himself in the following terms :—' Gentlemen, this day, which renews our efforts and our homage, was to have been marked by the novelty which we had prepared for you; but the actor who is going to have the honour of appearing before you for the first time was too deeply interested, and too impatient to learn his fate, to permit us to postpone his début. "Should your novelty fail," said he, "I shall learn how your public hisses, and that is something that I do not want to learn; should it succeed I shall know how they applaud, and I shall draw, perhaps, a sad comparison between its reception and that which may be accorded to me." So as not to give this new actor any grounds for reproach, we have conformed entirely with his wishes. He knows, gentlemen, not only what he has to dread in appearing before you, but also in following that excellent actor whom we have lost (Thomassin) in whose rôle you are about to see him. These just causes of apprehension would be counterbalanced in his mind if he were aware of the resources which await him in your indulgence; but it is in vain that we have endeavoured to reassure him on this score; he can be convinced of the truth of it only by yourselves, and we hope, gentlemen, that you will be disposed to fulfil the promises which we have made to him on your behalf. They are founded upon an experience so long and so happy that we are as assured of your kindliness as you must be of our zeal and profound respect.' "

It was in such terms that the public was flattered in those days. And being thus flattered, it received Carlin with an indulgence of which he was very far from standing in need.

Carlin's performance was easy, natural and comical. Garrick, seeing him in a scene in which he had just received a correction from his master, menacing this last with one hand, whilst rubbing his side with the other, was so charmed by the naturalness of his miming that he exclaimed: "Behold, how the very back of Carlin has a physiognomy and an expression!"

Carlin Bertinazzi was, like Domenico and all great buffoons, of a very melancholy character; he depended upon his wit and not upon his temperament.

Of Domenico it is related that, being intensely troubled with his spleen, he went to consult Dumoulin, a celebrated doctor, who prescribed for him as a remedy that he should go and see Domenico at the Comédie-Italienne, because

Domenico made all the world laugh. "Alas!" replied the poor actor, "I am Domenico, and from now onwards I must look upon myself as a lost man."

To his histrionic talents Carlin united considerable knowledge on various subjects and all the qualities that go to make a good member of society.

It is related that on a lovely summer evening, when the heat was suffocating, and Carlin was to perform in two plays, Camerani, the manager, came to inform him that there was but one spectator in the theatre, and that there was no occasion to give a performance. Carlin laughed, and replied that it was necessary to play none the less since there was *a* public (un *public*). The curtain rose; Carlin appeared, drew his wooden sword, took a turn round the theatre, and after a thousand capers which provoked great bursts of laughter from a fat gentleman seated in a corner of the orchestra, he advanced to the footlights and addressed him:

"Monsieur Tout-Seul, we are desolated, my comrades and I, to be compelled to play in such weather as this to one single spectator; nevertheless, if you demand it, play we will."

The spectator entered into conversation with the actor, informed him that he was from the country, and that he had come to Paris for no other purpose but that of seeing him perform, and implored Carlin to grant him this favour. Carlin resigned himself and began his performance. All at once the sky became overcast, thunder rumbled and rain came down in torrents. The theatre filled itself as by enchantment, and in less than an hour the receipts rose to nine hundred livres, an enormous figure at this epoch. At the end of the second and last piece, Carlin came forward again to the footlights and sought his fat gentleman, who had been convulsed with laughter throughout the performance. "Monsieur Tout-seul, are you still there?" he cried. The man from the provinces rose to reply: "Yes, M. Carlin, and you have made me laugh very much." "Monsieur Tout-seul, I come to thank you for having compelled us to perform; as a consequence our receipts are enormous. Thank you then once more, Monsieur Tout-seul." "I am enchanted, M. Carlin. Au revoir," replied the fat country gentleman, striding across his bench to depart, whilst the audience shook with laughter.

When there was hesitation to announce a performance, either on account of the heat or from any other cause, Carlin would say to Camerani: "Let us put up our bills, none the less. Who knows?—perhaps Monsieur Tout-seul will come this evening."

Carlin died in Paris in 1675. He was still playing within a very short time of his death. His advanced age had robbed him of none of his vivacity, mirth and suppleness. The following epitaph was written in his honour:

"De Carlin pour peindre le sort,
Très peu de mots doivent suffire:
Toute sa vie il a fait rire,
Il a fait pleurer à sa mort."

As author he has left us *Les Métamorphoses d'Arlequin.*

Modern literature has made of him an historical personage. A very remarkable novel of M. de Latouche attributes to him a regular correspondence with Pope Clement XIV., who was in fact an old schoolfellow of his. MM. Rochefort and Gustave Lemoine wrote some years ago a very pretty piece on this subject. Carlin, ignorant that the new pope was that same Lorenzo Ganganelli, the friend of his youth, received a visit from him, addressed him familiarly in the second person singular, and performed with him a scene of which Ganganelli held the manuscript, laughing so heartily the while that he kept forgetting to take up his cues.

On the subject of the début of a Harlequin at the Théâtre-Italien, Collé, in his *Journal Historique*, speaks as follows of the masters of the burlesque art:—

"On Monday, the 21st inst. (June 1751), I went to the Comédie to see a new Harlequin who has been playing there for several days. He is a very nimble rascal, a mountebank, a sort of rope dancer, a buffoon and a sound comedian; as he is merely a bird of passage, the Italians would not have been so ill-advised as to have permitted him to appear upon the stage if he had been better than, or even the equal of Carlin, their present Harlequin. The latter, who for some years now has been in possession of this rôle, does not acquit himself at all badly, although he is sometimes ponderous in his action and always stupid in his subjects, whatever may be said to the contrary by the partisans of these paltry spectacles. But we may say at least that Thomassin, his predecessor was quite as stupid as Carlin, and even perhaps more so, although he repaired his short-comings by an unflagging energy and inimitable grace. This comedian even went so far as to endow his Harlequin with a singular attribute; he gave him a pathetic side; he could move his audience even to tears in certain pieces such as *La Double Inconstance*, *Timon*, *L'Isle des Esclaves*, and others; this has always seemed to me a prodigy to perform under the mask of Harlequin."

In 1777 Bigottini took up the rôles of Harlequin. Grimm refers to him as follows:—

> "A young Harlequin of sixty odd summers, the Sieur Bigottini, has made his début on the stage of the Comédie-Italienne in a piece of his own, entitled *Arlequin Esprit Follet.* The performance of the Sieur Bigottini has no analogy with that of the actor he is replacing; he has not the same grace nor the same subtlety, nor yet the same naïveté; nevertheless his metamorphoses are ingenious and varied, and his movements, without having the suppleness which characterised the slightest gestures of Carlin, are of extraordinary precision and lightness. Nothing could equal the swiftness with which he changes his costume and his mask; his talent on this point approaches prodigy, but it is a style of merit which must fail to amuse for very long. It is only wit that may be infinitely varied, it is only grace whose charm never stales."

At the end of the eighteenth century, one of the most celebrated Harlequins of Italy was Golinetti.

The character of Harlequin, which underwent as many variations in its type as in the orthography of the name, which from *Harlequino* became *Arlechino*, *Arlichino* and, to-day, *Arlecchino*, has more or less passed from fashion in Italy. Meneghino and Stenterello have taken his place. Nevertheless he is still to be found in the marionette theatres. There he is dressed in garments broken into squares of yellow, red and green. He still wears his mask and his black chin-piece to simulate a beard; but, perhaps to indicate his great age, his moustachios and his eyebrows have become white.

In France the type is more or less extinct. The wit which he developed in the eighteenth century has descended once more to his legs. He is no more than a traditional mime, more or less graceful. His last successes were leaped and danced by Cossard and Derruder.

In Italy the principal actors who filled the part were: Fremeri, in 1624; Belotti, in 1625; Girolamo Francesco, in 1630; Astori of Venice, in 1720; Bertoli, in 1730; Ignazio Casanova, of Bologna, in 1734.

vi

Trivelino is, under another name and in a different costume, what Harlequin was before Domenico gave him that attribute of subtlety which his successors have always preserved.

Instead of lozenges arranged symmetrically, we find small triangles over the seams of his garments and suns and moons scattered here and there upon his coat and breeches. He too wears the soft hat with the rabbit-tail, but he does not carry a bat. For the rest his name, which signifies a wearer of rags, is perhaps the real name borne by Harlequin before the sixteenth century.

We have said that in 1635 Domenico Locatelli (Trivelin) was performing on the stage of the Comédie-Italienne in Paris, when Domenico Biancolelli went there to make his début under the name of Arlechino. They were both lackeys, and they portrayed more or less the same character. They presented a sort of duplicated rôle and they were known as first and second zany, for in many of the pieces of the Italian troupe which went to Paris in 1716 the rôles of zanies are played under the names of Trivelino, Arlechino and Scapino indifferently.

In the companies that roved through Italy in the seventeenth century the rôle of Trivelino was that of an intriguer who incessantly tormented that poor fool Arlechino. He was in league with Fritellino and Truffaldino to play the most damnable tricks upon the Doctor and upon Pantaloon ; he was, in short, a thorough-paced rascal, a worthy rival of Brighella.

Thus, in *Artémire*, a parody given at the Théâtre-Italien in 1720, we have the following scene :—

TRIVELINO. The goods of Pantaloon shall be my salary. Crime is to be approved when it is necessary. But here comes Harlequin ; though something of a fool, I would have him join us in this plot. (*To* HARLEQUIN.) Are you brave ?

HARLEQUIN. Yes, particularly at table.

TRIVELINO. I know your talents for eating and for drinking, and I know the activity of your jaws, but I want other exploits from you at present. I have chosen you for a daring enterprise.

HARLEQUIN. Pantaloon is alive. . . .

TRIVELINO. That does not worry me. I have determined to murder him.

HARLEQUIN. Fie ! that smells of the gibbet.

TRIVELINO. I want you, my dear Harlequin, to second me.

HARLEQUIN. In the art of murder I am still a novice. Do not reckon upon me.

TRIVELINO. You are a coward.

HARLEQUIN. Better words, my friend ! I am prudent. . . . But, to assassinate Pantaloon—no, no. . . . I cannot without sorrow behold the slaughter of a pig. How then can I murder Pantaloon ?

Domenico Locatelli, who performed the rôles of Trivelino at the Petit-Bourbon Theatre, went to France in 1645. He was an excellent comedian. He wrote a very spectacular French piece entitled *Rosaure, Impératrice de Constantinople,* which was performed in 1658. After a brilliant career he died in March of 1671.

Pierre-François Biancolelli, born in 1681, and known under the name of Domenico, which had been borne by his father, was educated at a Jesuit college. Upon leaving school he joined Giuseppe Tortoretti (Pasquariello) who was then touring the provinces. He made his début with success as Trivelino at Toulouse. He then went to Montpellier, where he married Tortoretti's daughter, with whom he had become enamoured in Paris, and for whose sake he had turned comedian.

He repaired immediately to Italy with his wife, and performed in Venice, Milan, Parma, Mantua and Genoa, returning afterwards to France, where he played in the provinces until 1710. He returned to Paris and performed until 1717 at the fairs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent, after which he entered the Italian company of the Regent. This Biancolelli was the author of more than eighty pieces for the Italian repertory. He died in Paris in 1734.

vii

The first creation of TRUFFALDINO took place somewhere about 1530 in the troupe of the famous Angelo Beolco (Ruzzante). He represents the sly and lying servant under the name of *Truffa* (the crafty). This type achieved popularity in Italy, and towards the middle of the seventeenth century it became one of the varieties of Harlequin, under the diminutive of Truffaldino.

In *La Vaccaria* of Ruzzante, Truffa is the servant of Flavio, a young lover, and in *La Rhodiana* by the same author, he is the servant of Roberto, whom he aids in his amours.

" You may trust me entirely " (he assures his master), " because, although you see me in these peasant garments, I am nevertheless of anything but low extraction. I disclose myself to you alone, assured that you will not betray my secret. Learn that my real name is Gasparo, and that I am the son of Roberto San-Severino ; I was compelled to flee my country on account of a love affair with a beautiful lady whose relatives sought my life. I have travelled in Italy, in the East and in the West, and I have learnt several languages that have proved very useful to me. Finally, being in Venice, I fell in love with the daughter of my mistress, named Lucretia, and so that I might commune with her in secret, I assumed the garments of a peasant. Do not be offended if, whether alone with you or in company, I employ a language that corresponds with my dress."

Towards 1738 the actor Sacchi was playing in Italy, and particularly in Venice, rôles similar to that of Harlequin, under the name of *Truffaldino*, a Bergamese caricature. Goldoni and the Abbé Chiari had boasted that they would drive the Commedia dell' Arte and the leather masks from the theatre. Sacchi, seeing the national company disappearing, quitted Venice with his troupe and his friends, Brighella, Tartaglia and Pantaloon, to seek his fortune beyond the seas. But the great earthquake at Lisbon drove them out of Portugal. Sacchi then returned to Venice with his troupe, and, in 1761, the theatre of San-Samuele, which had been closed for five years, was put into repair and reopened with *L'Amour des Trois Oranges*, a fable in five acts, by Carlo Gozzi. The marvellous genre being supported by Gozzi, became a subject of enthusiasm in Venice until 1769, in which year a rival troupe appropriated Sacchi's pieces and actors, opened the theatre of Sant' Angelo, and brought about his ruin, notwithstanding the endeavours made by Sacchi in giving the public *commedie sostenute.* "But," says M. Paul de Musset, "the decadence and the dispersion of Sacchi's company was none the less inevitable. Truffaldino was growing old and infirm. Further to complicate matters the old fool fell in love with La Ricci (Gozzi's mistress), and notwithstanding his seventy years, he gave umbrage to our poet. One day Gozzi discovered La Ricci in the act of cutting out some white satin to make a gown. The material was a present from Sacchi, and the young leading lady would have desired, with Italian naïveté, to have retained at one and the same time the lengths of satin and her virtue. So much was decidedly impossible. She kept the satin."

The character as performed by Sacchi was that of a poltroon, who is beaten and deceived. Bombastic, very proud of his birth, and calling all others low born, he was nevertheless the butt of the piece. Sacchi was an admirable improvisor, and the rôles destined for him in the plays of Carlo Gozzi are not written *in extenso*.

"No one," says Gozzi, "may write the rôle of Truffaldino, either in prose or in verse. It suffices Sacchi to know the intention of the author, so as to enable him to improvise scenes superior to any which a writer might have prepared him."

Those passages which are intended to be performed by Truffaldino are merely indicated as follows:—"Truffaldino enters, goes through his pleasantries," or even more simply: "Enter Truffaldino," and then "Exit Truffaldino." In certain pieces nevertheless his rôle is more fully set forth.

TRUFFALDINO. You ask me what I am and what I am going to do. I am going to tell you; and I shall sincerely relate to you the story of my life. I came from the foundling hospital. Let me consider a moment my genealogical tree. It is most probable that I am the son of a king, because I have always experienced in my blood a great superiority. In the foundling hospital they attempted to teach me to read and to write, but my greatness of soul could never permit me to lower myself to such meannesses. In consequence of a certain inherent royal ferocity, it was my fate to break the skull of a teacher. After that I ran away and by virtue of my heroism I became a mendicant. Taken by corsairs I was sold as a slave. The Turks, perceiving in my physiognomy the indelible signs of my noble origin and admiring the majesty of my stomach, valued me in the market at the price of fifty philippes. My buyer, having thoroughly experienced how monarchically I was disposed to despise all such work as was set me, sold me again for fifty livres. My third buyer harnessed me with a donkey. In this situation I became so celebrated for my indifference to any kind of occupation other than that of eating that my latest buyer sold me for twenty-seven livres and a half. At last I was decorated with an honourable kick and thus I quitted slavery with honour and glory. I was as much out of place there as a fish in a meadow or a cheese in a library. After all that I have told you, you will readily see for yourself the nature of the employment for which I am fitted.

II

POLICHINELLE

"B-R-R-R-R-R. . . . B-R-R-R-R-R. . . . Yes, my children! Here I am! I, Polichinelle with my big stick! Here I am! The little man is still alive, you see. I come to amuse you, as pleasantly as I can, for certain *quidams* have told me that you are sad! Now, why should you be sad? Is not life a pleasant thing, an idle jest, a veritable farce, in which all the world is the theatre and where there is plenty to excite your laughter, if you will but take the trouble to look? It is getting on for four thousand years, my children, that I have been parading my humps about the surface of the globe, among men who are no whit less ferocious and savage than tigers and crocodiles; and it is getting on for four thousand years that I have been laughing, sometimes until I have had a pain in my back. Is it not droll, is it not very droll, tell me, to see upon such a little space as that which we call the world, this ant-heap of creatures, each of which, taken separately, conceives itself to be privileged by all nature? Ask one of these atoms if it would change its skin with its neighbour. Ah no, be easy, its own skin pleases it too well. But ask it if it would change its purse with that of its neighbour. 'Oh yes, if his is fatter than mine,' it will answer you. And each one strives, comes, goes, amasses, stirs up, rolls, grovels, and gives more thought to to-morrow than to yesterday. You would suppose to look at them that they must live for ever. They are all mad! Observe me this one, he amasses and piles up ducat upon ducat, waiting until the hour of his death to make use of this fortune. His son makes haste to scatter it all, and goes to a deal of trouble to ruin himself in body as well as in purse; sometimes he dies before having succeeded. That is the law; to make and to unmake. Behold me this fellow, who plagues his brains to discover some means of attracting the attention of some other unfortunates who do not wish to be turned aside from the road which they follow, which their fathers followed, and which their children will follow. He has had some sort of a notion to disturb his neighbours; they seize him, shut him up, or have him burnt or drowned. Is it not droll? Ah! you would have laughed to have seen thousands of human carcasses hanging from the trees by the roadside after I know not what jest had gone through the minds of some lunatics. I never laughed so much as some fifteen centuries ago. There were whole roastings of people whose tort it was to be weaker than those who were the stronger at that time. It was very amusing to see them rent and devoured by wild animals. You're going to call me a dull fellow, a fool, and to tell me that I have not understood what I have seen. Pish! my children! it is best to laugh at things, for the children of these disembowelled wretches avenged themselves later on.

"But droller still, the drollest thing of all, is woman. Ah! now there we have a strange animal! Oh, the vanity, the malice of these little beings, for whom I am still capable of committing follies! By Pluto or by Satan! (they are both one, and I don't think much of either, for after all they are but human inventions) it is good to watch men and women desiring each other, deceiving each other, hating each other.

The two sexes have declared war, and yet neither can live without the other. Ask a man what he thinks of women. He will reply: 'They are vain and untruthful.' Ask a woman what she thinks of men. She will say: 'They are egotistical and perfidious!' Come, come! there is truth on both sides, because with gold either may be bought. Be rich and you shall be honoured, loved and flattered; you shall be beautiful, even young if you please; you shall find love, consideration and honours. Be poor and you shall not be worth a string of onions!

"I can see from here one or two who do not share my opinion. They may please themselves; they are still young. If, like me, they had seen whole cities disappear under volcanic ashes, if their shoes had been scorched by the hot lava of Vesuvius, if they had seen the sanguinary people of the south hurl themselves upon the ferocious people of the north, and vice versa; if they had spoken the truth in three words, as I did, to the mighty ones of the earth; if they had told the proudest nations of the world that they were no better than savages and brutes, they would think differently, and they would consider the matter carefully before contradicting me.

"Is my conscience wide and easy? Of course it is! that which belongs to others belongs to me; and I have only to stoop so as to fill my hat with the gold and the wealth of my neighbours. You find that wrong? It is my point of view; I have such a contempt for men that I am little concerned with what they may think or say of me.

"But do not dare to call me a thief! It is not the word that wounds me, it is the intention. Take care! I have never been insulted with impunity, and I am never more to be feared than when I am in a good humour. You do not deserve that I should waste my merry words upon you, because that which should make you laugh seems, instead, to annoy you. What! would you weep because everything goes wrong? Look at me! I have suffered as much as any man, but I cover my hump and my heart with a cuirass. I am laughter incarnate, laughter triumphant. So much the worse for those rows of paper capuchins which are to be overthrown by the first breath that blows. I am of wood and iron, and as old as the world!"

Polichinelle is right to say that his heart is as dry as his cudgel: he is an egotist in the fullest acceptance of the term. Under a good-humoured exterior he is a ferocious being: he works evil for the pleasure of it. Caring no more for the life of a man than for that of a flea, he delights in quarrels, making a point of seeking them, and takes great pleasure in bloodshed. Far from being a boaster he does not always speak of his evil actions, and whenever you hear his laughter crackling, you may be sure that he has killed his man. He fears neither God not devil, for he has beheld too many civilisations and religions come and go under his hooked and warty nose.

After his cudgel—his staff of credit, as he calls it, because it is the money with which he pays his debts—his chief predilections are women and the bottle. It is very true, as he says himself, that for women money is necessary, and he has no money. Although he pretends that he has only to stoop to take what he needs from the coffers of his friends, his friends are not quite so simple; they hide themselves and their riches on his approach. Without money it is necessary to be persuasive towards the fair sex, and, notwithstanding his humps and his unattractive figure, he is so caustic, so cajoling, so enterprising and so insolent, that he is not without his successes.

"I have no illusions on the score of my physical appearance," he declares, "and I shall not disclose to you my secret, because I do not know it; on the other hand, can you explain women to me? He who pleases them does so because he pleases them; there are no other reasons. Woman is a bizarre and mysterious being: she is the only good thing in this world, after wine and hard knocks."

He loves all women alike because there is not one who may boast that she held him long.

ii

It would be somewhere about the year 540 of Rome, that the Romans introduced the style of improvised pieces known as Atellanæ, with Maccus, Bucco, Pappus, and Casnar as the principal types, speaking Oscan, Greek and Latin.

Their subjects were nearly always rustic, setting forth the manners of the peasants of the Campagna, and the oddities of the inhabitants of the little cities. It is *Pappus prœteritus*, or, as it were, Pantaloon dismissed; Maccus the soldier; Maccus, the testamentary legatee, the doctor, the painter, the baker; Pappus agricola, etc. The Atellanæ possessed two distinct buffoons, two *sanniones*: Maccus, who was lively, witty, insolent and a little ferocious; and Bucco, who was a self-satisfied flatterer, boaster, thief and coward. In the modern PULCINELLA these two characters are combined; he is a mixture of bravery and cowardice, of stupid vanity and witty insolence.

It is pretended that these opposite traits of character were similarly attributed to Maccus, the Oscan peasant, who in his day was as well known and loved as is Pulcinella now.

"Maccus, the Oscan character," says M. Ferdinand Fouque, "has a character compounded of stupidity, impertinence, and disorder, as his name indicates, because in Greek, *μακκοἂδθαι* signifies to play the buffoon, to drivel, to be mad. Maccus of the Atellanæ corresponds sometimes to Harlequin, but more often to Polichinelle. The image in metal preserved in the museum of the Marquis Capponi is a Maccus. He wears a sort of cloak, which descends to his knees, and he is shod in sandals. His head is shaved, his nose is large and hooked. Another Maccus is to be seen upon a cornelian: he is dressed in purple, his feet are naked, his head shaven, his pendulous nose covers his mouth and chin, giving him a stupid expression; his face is phlegmatic, and his arms, crossed upon his breast, are entwined into his coat. He represents a philosophic Maccus akin to the Pulcinella of the comedy entitled *Pulcinella the Pretended Doctor* (*Pulcinella Finto Dottore*).

"Bucco is of Oscan origin. In name and countenance he resembles the parasites of comedy. His character is compounded of loftinesses and meannesses, of oddities and of follies. He can be pleasant at need, impertinent according to the circumstances; subtle, officious, insinuating, clownish, garrulous, indolent, greedy and familiar: he has all the vices which go with the manners of a corrupt nation; also he possesses the secret of pleasing the great and rendering himself necessary to them: he studies their tastes, adapts himself to their fancies, ministers to their passions and countenances their libertine undertakings. Bucco had monstrous cheeks and an enormous mouth."

Pulcinella, then, descends in a direct line from Maccus. But how has the name of Pulcinella come to substitute that of Maccus? The point has been practically cleared up by now. We know that Maccus had a crooked nose, long legs, a slightly arched back, a prominent stomach, and that, after the fashion of all the ancient mimes, he excited mirth quite as much by his gestures and his cries as by such witticisms as he uttered. The special attribute of Maccus was to imitate the cries of birds and the cackle of hens, by means of a sort of bird-call which became the *sgherlo* or *pivetta*. This instrument cannot have been of his invention; no doubt he borrowed it from those schœnobates, or Greek marionette performers, who had invented their *sgherlo* to imitate the voices of actors passing through the speaking trumpet of the mask and acquiring thus a metallic ring. Maccus came therefore to be nicknamed, in consequence of these avian cries of his, and perhaps also because of his beak-like nose and his eccentric gait, *Pullus gallinaceus*, and hence, by contraction, Pulcinella.

A little bronze figure suggesting Maccus, now in the Capponi Museum, was unearthed in Rome in 1727. Of this the Abbé of Saint-Non remarks in his *Voyage de Naples*, in 1782: "But what may perhaps seem remarkable is to find here a Polichinelle who, in the essential features, is absolutely similar to our own, with the humps behind and in front." He supplies a drawing of this little image, of which he further says: "This bizarre figure is copied from an ancient bronze found in Rome in 1727. The original is preserved in the Capponi Museum, together with the history of this character, of whom it is impossible to deny that the titles and the genealogy are of the greatest antiquity:

> "Vetus histrio personatus in Esquiliis repertus an. 1727 ad magnitudinem æri archetypi expressus, cui oculi et in utroque oris angulo Sannæ seu globuli argentæi sunt. Gibbus in pectore et in dorso, inque pedibus socci. Hujus generis moriones et ludiones, verbis gestique ad risum movendum compositi, locum habuerunt in jocularibus fabulis Atellanis, ab Atella Oscorum opido, inter Capuam et Neapolim, ubi primum agi cæperunt denominatæ. Unde homines absurdo habitu oris et reliqui corporis cachinnos a natura excitantes, etiamnum prodeunt; huic nostro persimiles et vulgo Pullicinellæ dicuntur, a Pulliceno fortasse: qua voce Lampridius in Severo Alexandro, Pullum gallinaceum appellat. Pullicinellæ autem speciatim excellunt adunco, prominentique naso, rostrum pullorum et pipionum imitante."

Louis Riccoboni gives at the end of his *Histoire du Théâtre Italien* a reproduction of this same little image. It is to be observed that in each corner of the mouth there is a little ball which can only belong to a sort of *sgherlo* or bird-call.

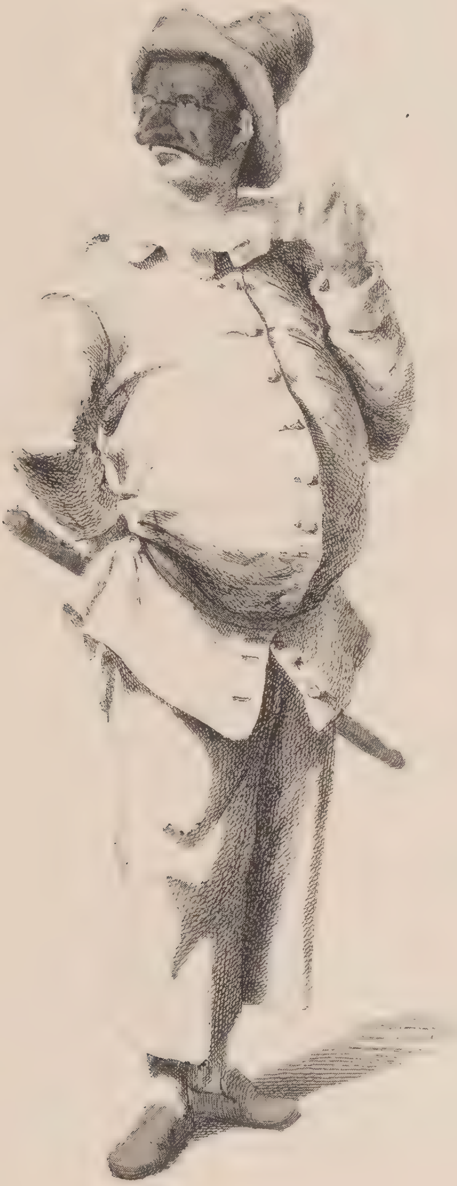
"In the course of writing my *History of the Italian Theatre*," he says, speaking of the *Mimus Centunculus*, "I had entered into conjectures on the score of the character of the Neapolitan Polichinelle, and I had supposed him a *Mimus Albus*, giving him a derivation as ancient as that of Harlequin; but as I failed to find proofs that should in any way support my opinion I suppressed that chapter when the book was on the point of going to press. If at that time I had been acquainted with the monument of which I speak (the little bronze image) I should have worked on Diomedes and Apuleius, to arrive at the conclusions which have been reached by Italian scholars. No further proof is needed to assure me that I was not mistaken when I believed Polichinelle to be a direct descendant of the *Mimus Albus* of the Atellane comedies."

In an article upon the Italian comedy written by George Sand in 1852, is the following statement:—

"The most ancient of all the types is the Neapolitan Polichinelle. He descends in direct line from Maccus of the Campagna, or, rather, he is the same character. The ancient Maccus did not appear in regular comedy but in that very ancient kind of satirical drama called Atellanæ, from the name of the city of Atella, which had given it birth. A bronze statue, discovered in Rome in 1727, can leave no doubt on the score of the identity of Maccus and Polichinelle. The Polichinelle of the Atellanæ is equipped like his descendants with two enormous humps, a nose hooked like the beak of a bird of prey, and heavy shoes, tied about the ankle, which are not unlike our modern sabots. His air is mocking, sceptical and evil; two little silver balls placed at the corners of his lips increase the size of his mouth and lend his countenance something false and base, an expression entirely foreign to that of the modern Polichinelle. This difference between the externals of the two personages seems to me to indicate a profounder difference between the characters. The ancient type must have been somewhat baser and more hateful than the modern Polichinelle; provoking laughter chiefly by his deformities, I imagine that I can see from afar a sort of Thersites, popular in the struggle with the oppression of slavery and ugliness. Polichinelle personifies the accomplished revolt; he is hideous but he is terrible, severe and vengeful; neither god nor devil can make him tremble when he wields his great cudgel. By means of this weapon, which he freely lays about the shoulders of his master and the heads of public officers, he exercises a sort of summary and individual justice which avenges the weak side and the iniquities of official justice. I am confirmed in this opinion by the fact that in the Neapolitan farces two Polichinelles are to be found: one is base and doltish, the veritable son of Maccus: the other is daring, thieving, quarrelsome, Bohemian and of a more modern creation."

When the pagan theatres were destroyed, and the tragedies and the comedies suppressed with them, we know that the Atellanæ continued to be performed in the public places. Polichinelle took part in them as well as Harlequin who also was beloved by the Romans.

Throughout the entire Middle Ages, an epoch in which the theatres saw none but mystery plays, Polichinelle was never seen. He had disappeared. It is only in the sixteenth century, upon the renascence of the theatres, that a comedian named Silvio Fiorello wrested this character from oblivion and introduced Pulcinella into the Neapolitan shows. Fiorello was the leader of a troupe of comedians. He himself played under the name of Captain Matamoros, and entrusted the rôle of Pulliciniello (as it was then called) to Andrea Calcese, a sometime tailor, surnamed *Ciuccio*, who imitated to perfection the accent and the ways of the peasants of Acerra, near Naples.



The costume of Pulcinella has varied but little since the days of this Andrea Calcese. Pulliciniello—it is thus that he is still called in the begininng of the seventeenth century—wears a sort of ample white blouse, gripped about his waist by a leather belt which carries a wooden sabre and a purse. His trousers are wide and pleated; his shoes are of leather. He wears no collar and a rag of white material with green embroidery serves him as a *tabaro;* he wears a black half-mask with long moustachios; his head is covered by a white skull-cap and an enormous grey hat whose brim is looped up on either side into the shape of an enormous cap such as was still worn under Louis XI.

It was thus that he was presented by Argieri, born in Rome, and known in Paris as *Polichinel romain.* At the foot of a picture of him is to be read: "Burlesque mask, speaking the language of the Neapolitan peasants and dressed in white linen feigning stupidity."

In the middle of the seventeenth century at the Comédie-Italienne in Paris Pulcinella suddenly effected a change in his costume. Barbançois, the *Pulcinella* of Mazarin's troupe, imitated Jupilles, the French *Polichinel* of 1640. He assumed doublet and breeches of red and yellow, laced with green, but he continued to wear the hat and mantle of the Italian tradition.

In 1697 Michael Angelo da Fracassano exaggerated the two humps of the costume, assuming a grey felt hat adorned by two cock's feathers, and thus rendering his appearance absolutely similar to that of the Polichinel of the fairs. It is in this guise that he has been represented by Watteau.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century we find Pulcinella succumbing in Italy to the French influence; under the name of *Pulcinello*, Coleson, who enjoyed a great vogue in the forain theatres of Florence, Venice, Milan and Paris, represents him with a stomach which entirely fills his ample coat buttoned from top to bottom. He wears the black half-mask with a protuberant nose, surmounted by a great wart, the collar and the high-crowned, wide-brimmed great hat; his trousers are wide and rather short. He is still dressed in white linen and wields a heavy cudgel. This character, called in Bologna Purricinella, seems to me to be Roman rather than Neapolitan, for the costume of the Neapolitan type has been but little modified since his creation. According to Riccoboni this fat and heavy personage was the second Neapolitan Pulcinella, the stupid type.

"The Neapolitan comedies" (he says), "instead of a Scapin and a Harlequin, have two Polichinelles, one cunning and the other stupid. It is the common opinion of the country that these two opposite characters were drawn from the city of Beneventum, the capital of the Samnites of the Latins. It is said that this city, the half of which is on the top of a hill, the other half at the foot, produces men of entirely different characters."

Beneventum is built like Bergamo, where, as we have seen, the same tradition existed, the stupid Harlequin representing the inhabitants of the lower town, and the witty Brighella those of the higher.

Pulcinello, then, is to be accepted as the type of the stupid and the coarse, a direct descendant of Maccus; whilst the Neapolitan Pulcinella, witty and astute, may be considered the sensual descendant of Bucco. This latter type became European. In France he was known as Polichinelle; in England as Punch, an abbreviation of Punchinello, and Jack Pudding; in Germany as Hanswurst (Jack Sausage) and Pulzinella; in Holland as Toneelgek; in Spain as Don Christoval Pulichinela; even in the East, Karagheus is none other than Polichinelle.

Pulcinella is, turn by turn, and according to the piece, master, servant, magistrate, poet or dancer, but never an acrobat; in essentials the character is always the same. In what concerns him the piece adapts itself to his rôle. Sometimes, but rarely—and then only in the marionette theatres—one has seen him married to a Pulcinellina, and thus equipped with wife and children.

"Thirty years ago," says a wit, in the middle of the nineteenth century, "there was not a single individual in Naples who had not in himself something of Pulcinella. A deal of that has been lost to-day, but sufficient still remain."

In Naples, Pulcinella took up his domicile in the theatre of San Carlino.

"It is there," says M. Fred. Mercey, "that night and day he is the hero of marvellous and comical adventures. Indeed, although the Polichinelle of San Carlino is not of wood, he never rests, and whenever some new piece has been announced for morning and evening performance, *most choice in all its scenes, full of bizarre happenings, with Pulcinella,* Pulcinella must be under arms and on view living or dead."

Do you wish to form an idea of these pieces, *most choice in* *all their scenes, full of bizarre happenings,* pieces which owe their success entirely to Pulcinella? Let us analyse one or two, selecting preferably from those which best reveal the Neapolitan character.

Pulcinella, Brigand-Chief

The scene is laid in Calabria. Pulcinella, whose business affairs have been going badly, devotes himself to a fresh line of industry; he exploits the highways. Pulcinella has all the attributes that go to make an excellent brigand-chief. He is without scruples and without mercy, and he professes a most sovereign contempt for human life. The new chief has designs upon the wife of a miller of the neighbourhood of Nicastro, who, in addition to her personal attractions, has, if public rumour is to be believed, a great sack of ducats in her cupboard. Pulcinella leaves his band in a neighbouring wood and, accompanied by a single follower, he goes to visit the miller's wife. So as not to arouse her suspicions, he conceals his follower behind a bush, and presents himself alone upon her threshold. The day is Sunday, and the brigand has chosen it because he knows that the miller will be at Mass in the neighbouring township and that he will have left his wife alone with her child at the mill. Pulcinella represents himself as a miller's boy out of work. He is well received. Suddenly, seizing a moment in which the child has gone apart, he draws a knife and threatens to cut the woman's throat unless she gives him at once all the money she possesses. "My money is up there," she says, "in my cupboard. Come with me and I will give it to you." Pulcinella follows her. Whilst he is rummaging in the cupboard, the woman slips quickly out of the room, shuts the door and turns the key. The windows are equipped with iron bars; the door is a half-foot thick. Pulcinella is taken in a gin like a starling. The miller's wife loses no time; she calls her child: "Run to Nicastro," she bids him, "and fetch your father and the carabineers; run quickly, tell him that there is a brigand in the house." The child sets out, but Pulcinella's companion, hearing the cries of his chief, bars the lad's passage and seizes him. The miller's wife, however, does not lose courage. She bolts the doors and barricades the windows. Her situation is most critical. She hears Pulcinella who, by means of a hammer, is beginning to demolish the ceiling over her head, and she sees her child threatened with death by the other brigand unless she opens. Eventually this brigand pinions the child, casts him into a corner, and sets about seeking some door or opening by which he may enter the house to deliver his chief. Presently the idea occurs to him to slip down the wheel of the mill and through the opening left by the axle of the sails; but at the same moment the miller's wife conceives the notion of setting this wheel in movement. The brigand is already half through the space between the wall and the axle when the miller's wife draws back the bolt which holds the wheel; this begins to move, and before it has turned twice the brigand is crushed as if by a pestle in a mortar. Meanwhile Pulcinella has completed his hole in the ceiling and is about to drop through into the chamber below when the miller arrives with a detachment of carabineers. Pulcinella does not lose courage. As these ascend the staircase leading to the chamber in which he is locked, he jumps down through the hole in the ceiling, escapes by another staircase, and climbs on to the roof of the house.

The remainder of the piece is merely a sort of burlesque divertissement, in which we see the miller's wife, the soldiers and the peasants pursuing Pulcinella, who displays his address and performs all sorts of *tours de force.* We see him, for instance, taking the place of the vane, and turning this way and that in the wind; but in the instant in which the carabineers are aiming at this extremely unmetallic vane, he leaps to the roof, and from the roof to the gardens, and thrusts himself into a corner, where he pretends to be a pillar. A soldier climbs upon this pillar to look through a window; the pillar comes to life and takes to its heels; then Pulcinella slips under a winnowing basket, and attempts to reach the wood, crawling like a tortoise. In the end he is taken and conducted to Nicastro to be hanged. The history of his hanging is well known. Pulcinella permits himself calmly to be led to the scaffold, but when the rope is ready he plays all sorts of tricks upon the hangman; he feigns stupidity and pretends not to be able to find the noose. "You fool!" cries the impatient hangman. "Look! It is thus that the noose is adjusted." And he slips his own head through it. Pulcinella seizes this favourable moment, takes hold of the rope, and strangles the hangman, crying to him: "How now? Am I still a fool?"

In *Le Ruine di Pompeia*, Pulcinella, who is in love with the daughter of one of the custodians of the place, has attached himself to a group of foreign visitors, whom he amuses with his sallies, and at whose expense he regales himself, stealing the best bits of their dinner, and for ever juggling away the coin which they place in the custodian's hand. The visitors end by seeing through his game, are displeased with it, and seek to seize him by the collar. Pulcinella grows angry; he raises his voice indignantly to protest that anyone should suspect an honourable man such as he, a person of his importance. He pretends to be, by turns, an English lord and a French officer. Soon, however, being convicted of imposture, and closely pressed, he plies his cudgel, takes to flight through the ruins, and suddenly disappears at the very moment in which his pursuers believe they have captured him. He is found at last in one of the newly discovered caves, lying amid a litter of empty amphoræ in company with the custodian's daughter. Everything is arranged, and the piece concludes with a marriage which appears to be extremely necessary.

The characters taking part in these pieces of an entirely national type are, in addition to Pulcinella and Scaramouche, the peasant, the Roman woman and the soldier.

Polliciniella, as he is called in the Neapolitan dialect, wears a sort of short and very ample blouse, with or without girdle, the sleeves of which are gathered at the wrist as are the trousers at the ankle ; his white shoes are strongly soled. He wears no collar ; his black half-mask is beardless, and his hat is a rimless grey or white felt in the shape of a sugar-cone. On certain occasions when it is necessary for him to dress up a little, he changes his felt hat for another of white cambric like his coat, as high and as singular in shape, but adorned with rose-coloured ribbons. His black half-mask has a large aquiline nose, embellished by a wart, and its cheeks are profoundly wrinkled to announce that Polliciniella was not born yesterday.

The spirit of this Polliciniella differs greatly from that of the French Polichinelle and the English Punch. He is a buffoon, a mocker and a jester, but not wicked. He represents the type of the Neapolitan bourgeois in its natural grossness but instinct with that biting spirit of which the Abbé Galiani is a refined type. He is slow in his movements (all famous Pulcinelle are very sparing of gesture), his air is foolish, but his wit is ready money, particularly in the asides which he always addresses directly to the public.

Although to be seen in various theatres in Naples, Pulcinella's special stage was that of the San Carlino, whither he would attract twice daily an audience drawn from all ranks of society. The San Carlino had a famous troupe, chiefly composed of masks of unalterable national types. Here, from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, several actors created great reputations, such as Celesi Balli and Tomaso Fabioni in 1800, Lucio Bebio in 1803, Camerano in 1805, etc. One famous Pulcinella was applauded there throughout five and twenty years. After having been one of the most brilliant cavalry captains of King Murat, after having accompanied him upon several great and victorious campaigns, after having been decorated by the Emperor Napoleon, when the Bourbons returned to Naples, he donned—either out of necessity or caprice—the coat of Pulcinella, and in this amassed a very handsome fortune. He was the idol not only of all Neapolitans but of all who understood the dialect. Restrained in his movements, cold, sluggish, full of awkwardness, speaking as little as possible, but seeing to it that the few words he uttered bore the imprint of the liveliest and most biting wit, he contrived, notwithstanding the mask which covered the half of his countenance, a miraculously expressive physiognomy. One of the buffooneries which he repeated frequently, especially during carnival (because in this season Polliciniella is forbidden to wear either mask or costume) was to eat mountains of macaroni, of which the character is traditionally very fond, out of an enormous *cantaro*. You might see him drawing forth these long macaroni and causing them to descend into his mouth from the full height of his arm, to the peals of laughter of his audience.

Speaking of Pulcinella, M. Charles Magnin says:

"The Pulcinella of Naples, a tall fellow, as straight as anyone else, noisy, alert, sensual, with his great hooked nose and black half-mask, his pyramidal grey bonnet, his white camisole, his wide white pantaloons, gathered and girt about his waist by a rope from which hangs a little bell, may well bring to mind the *Mimus Albus*, and the still more remote Maccus; but, with the exception of his beak-like nose and his bird-like name, he has no connection with, nor does he resemble, our French Polichinelle. For one trait of resemblance that is perceptible ten contrasting ones may be pointed out."

iii

"POLICHINELLE," says M. Charles Magnin, "such as we have made or adapted him, represents in the highest degree Gallic humour and physiognomy. I might even say that under the compulsory obligation of a loyal caricature, Polichinelle permits us to perceive the popular type, I dare not say of Henry IV., but at least of the Gascon officer, imitating his gait in the guard-rooms of the castle of Saint-Germain or of the old Louvre. As for the hump, Guillaume Bouchet reminds us that from time immemorial it has been the appendage of the jester *ès farces* of France. In the thirteenth century Adam de la Halle was called *the hunchback of Arras*, not because he was a hunchback, but on account of his mocking spirit:

> "On m'appelle bochu, mais je ne le suis mie."

As for the second hump, it brings to mind the bright and bulging cuirass of the soldier, and the pigeon breasts so much the fashion in that time which imitate the curve of the cuirass. Even the hat of Polichinelle (I do not refer to his modern *tricorne*, but to the felt with turned-up rim which he wore in the seventeenth century) was the headdress of the cavaliers of the time, the hat *à la Henri IV*. Lastly there is even in certain characteristic features, even in the jovial, daring, amorous humour of a good soldier, something that reminds me of the qualities and short-comings of the Béarnais. In short, notwithstanding his Neapolitan name, Polichinelle seems to me to be a type entirely French, and one of the most spontaneous and vivacious creations of Gallic fantasy."

It was in 1630, they say, that Polichinelle passed from the trestles to the marionette theatre. But in any case it is quite certain that in 1649 Polichinelle had his theatre on the left bank of the Seine, at the house of one Brioché or Briocci.

"I am Polichinelle
Who stand as sentinel
Before the Gate of Nesle."

"A tradition which still survives," says M. Charles Magnin, the learned historiographer of Polichinelle, "and which the true children of Paris, of Chartres and of Orleans transmit from one to another, has preserved for us the air and the couplets of the famous song of Polichinelle :

"'Je suis le fameux Mignolet,
Général des Espagnolets.
Quand je marche, la terre tremble :
C'est moi qui conduis le soleil,
Et je ne crois pas qu'en ce monde
On puisse trouver mon pareil.

"'Les murailles de mon palais
Sont bâties des os des Anglais ;
Toutes mes salles sont dallées
De têtes de sergents d'armées
Que dans les combats j'ai tués.

"'Je veux, avant qu'il soit minuit,
A moi tout seul prendre Paris.
Par-dessus les tours Notre-Dame,
La Seine je ferai passer ;
Des langues des filles, des femmes,
Saint-Omer je ferai paver. . . .'

"This song places Polichinelle as belonging to the reign of Henry IV. and the epoch of our long quarrels with Spain."

The real home of Polichinelle was in the fairs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent, at Bertrand and at Francisque, where for over a century he jested, making a mock of all people and all things; but many of his wickednesses were forgiven him on account of his shape and his wooden person.

In 1721, when the Théâtre-Français caused the theatres of the fairs to be closed, Polichinelle laughed and mocked more thoroughly than ever. In the following year Polichinelle covered again with his cudgel a vengeance which Lesage, Fuzelier and d'Orneval set themselves to extract from the united theatres of the Opéra, the Comédie-Française and Comédie-Italienne. They came to an understanding with Laplace, who managed a marionette theatre, and they gave him three unpublished comic operas which attracted all Paris, and emptied the royal theatres. Polichinelle sang and mocked still more loudly. Our three associates had hung out a sign upon which was a life-sized Polichinelle with this legend: "I am worth many another" (*J'en valons bien d'autres*).

The number of actors who have played Polichinelle is incredible. Among the pieces which had most success we may mention: *Polichinelle Grand Turc; Polichinelle Colin-Maillard; La Noce de Polichinelle et l'Accouchement de sa Femme; Les Amours de Polichinelle; Polichinelle Magicien; Polichinelle à la Guinguette de Vaugirard; Polichinelle Maçon; Polichinelle Don Quichette; Polichinelle Gros-Jean*, etc.

In 1793 the *Vieux Cordelier* exclaims:

> "This egotistical multitude is made blindly to follow the impulse of the stronger. . . . Alongside of the blade of the guillotine, under which crowned heads are falling and in the same place and at the same time, Polichinelle also is being guillotined, thus earning the attention of the avid mob."

But, after the 10th of Thermidor, Polichinelle took his revenge upon the executioner and upon the devil himself. He began again to beat and hang the pair of them as before and from the same rope.

In 1819, Arnault, speaking of the rôle of Polichinelle played at the Opéra by Ely and at the Porte Saint-Martin by Mazurier, wrote:

"He is an important character; he is the man of the day. During his quarter of an hour no one will dispute with him his public favour unless it is himself; for Polichinelle is double, as was Amphitryon in other days, and like that hero he combats also against himself, to the great satisfaction of the public. When one thinks of all the qualities that a perfect Polichinelle must unite in himself, it is difficult too greatly to congratulate the century which produced in duplicate such a model. In the matter of deformity Polichinelle should be what Apollo is in the matter of perfection. Humped, in front and behind, perched upon legs like a heron's, equipped with the arms of an ape, he must move with that nerveless stiffness, with that suppleness without springs which characterises the steps of a body deprived of the principle of movement, whose limbs, set in action by a cord, are attached to the trunk not by articulations but by rags. The aim of the actor in this rôle is to imitate the machine with the greatest fidelity which, in another rôle, this machine would employ to imitate the man. It is in this that the Polichinelle of the Porte Saint-Martin (Mazurier) is marvellously successful. There is nothing human about him; from the nature of his movements and his tumbles one cannot believe him to be flesh and bones; he seems of cotton-wool and cardboard. His countenance is truly wooden, and such is the illusion that he creates that children take him for a grown-up marionette, and perhaps they are right."

Speaking of Ely, at the Opéra, he says:

"What is there more clever than his gestures and his attitudes, whether when leaning against one of the wings he seems suspended from it rather than supported by it, or when collapsing upon himself he appears to have been abandoned by the hand which sustained him, or the nail from which he hung? It is truly sublime. Polichinelle has been accorded the honours of lithography. One may inscribe according to one's predilection for one or the other of these virtuosi the name either of Mazurier or of Ely."

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century M. Champfleury presented several very original pantomimes at the theatre of the Funambules. He sought to restore to light the character of Polichinelle, and in his scenarii he gave him something more to do than perpetually to break himself. He sought to rejuvenate the personage; but the ancient tradition was already lost, and Vauthier, who was an admirably wooden Polichinelle, could render only that with which he was acquainted—namely, the traditions of Mazurier and Ely.

"O Polichinelle," exclaims M. Charles Nodier, "original and capricious fetish of children! grotesque Achilles of the people! modest and powerful Roscius of the highways! inappreciable philosopher of the unfortunate ages which did not know Shakespeare!

"O Polichinelle, animated simulacrum of natural man given over to his naïve and ingenuous instincts! eternal type of truth of which the indolent centuries were slow to seize the deformed but witty and agreeable outline! O Polichinelle, whose original theme so often enchanted the leisures of Bayle and revived more than once the indolence of La Fontaine!

"O Polichinelle, inexhaustible orator, imperturbable philosopher, intrepid and vigorous logician, mighty practical moralist, infallible theologist, able and unerring politician!

"O Polichinelle, thou whose wooden head contains essentially in its compact and inorganic mass all the knowledge and all the common sense of the moderns!"

"Should we not be well-advised to reawaken Polichinelle?" asks M. Ch. Magnin. ". . . Above all do not suggest that he is dead. Polichinelle never dies. Do you doubt it? You cannot know, then, what Polichinelle is. He is the good sense of the people, he is the alert sally, he is laughter irrepressible. Yes, Polichinelle shall laugh and sing and whistle as long as there are vices, follies and eccentricities in the world. You see then that Polichinelle is very far from being dead. Polichinelle is immortal."

iv

It was in 1688, after the Stuarts, that Polichinelle passed into England. His English name of PUNCH is clearly derived from Punchinello, for in the early days of his installation in London he was called indifferently Punchinello and Punch. There, as in Paris, Punch became the king of the marionettes. This Neapolitan, after having been French, became, when he naturalised himself English, a difficult fellow to manage, of a mocking ferocity, which is still to-day the basis of his character.

M. Charles Magnin says that "Punch, according to the definition of Mr Payne, is the Don Juan of the populace." The most ancient text in which this able critic finds mention of the adventures of Punch and Judy is a ballad thought to be no older than 1790.

V

The German Polichinelle, HANSWURST (Jack Sausage), is, in the matter of character and wit, a mixture of Pulcinella and Harlequin, though resembling neither in costume. In the tenth century Hanswurst's exterior resembled that of the Neapolitan Pulcinella of the time, whilst, however, being very much fatter.

"He is," says M. Magnin, "a sort of *Franca-Trippa.* In the last two centuries the physical and moral type of Hanswurst has changed but little. This buffoon, according to Lessing, possesses two characteristic qualities. He is doltish and voracious, but of a voracity which profits him, so that he is in very different case from Harlequin, whose greediness profits him nothing and who in spite of it remains always light, svelte and nimble. In Holland, Hanswurst has for a long time now been no better than a clown: he thumps the drum at the door of the booth, and invites the crowd to enter. As actor and as marionette he has been supplanted by Hans Pickelharing (Jack Pickled Herring), and more recently by Jan-Klaassen. This latter, who has become the hero of the Dutch marionette theatre, has appropriated, not without success, the turbulent and jovially rascally habits of the English Punch and the Parisian Polichinelle. In Germany Hanswurst has had several rivals. He has been compelled to give way more than once to Harlequin, to Polichinelle and to Pickelharing."

In the eighteenth century this character was played in the German improvising troupes by Prehauser, who made of him a sort of lackey having some points of resemblance with Brighella. But the improvisation theatre of Vienna having been forced to give way to the classical theatre, Hanswurst was supplanted by Casperle, the joyous Austrian peasant.

vi

In Rome the inhabitants of Trastevere possessed two types which are certainly of the family of Polichinelle—types which nevertheless have aged a little: they are Meo-Patacca and his faithful companion Marco-Pepe.

Meo-Patacca is a native of Trastevere. He claims descent like Pulcinella from Maccus, in which very possibly he is justified. Like Maccus he is witty and insolent, and no better able to suffer contradiction, his most persuasive argument lying in his cudgel. He begins by striking, and having felled his man to earth he then proceeds to explanations with him. He has a bright and lively eye, a tanned skin, a profile exaggerating the ancient Roman type. He is the personification of the inhabitant of Trastevere, the descendant of Nero or of Maccus, whose blood has been slightly mingled in the course of time. He speaks the Roman dialect, and never utters a sentence without repeating its most energetic word, thus: "I want you to do so-and-so—I want it."

"He swallows," says M. Mercey in his *Théâtre en Italie,* "all the final syllables of his infinitives. He says *sape* for *sapere,* and *fa* for *fare*; or else he replaces the last syllables of these words by the particle *ne,* which he uses on all occasions; he thus says *fane* for *fare, sapene* for *sapere, chine* for *chi, quine* for *qui.* It also pleases him to transpose his *l*s and *r*s; thus when he speaks of his glory he does not say *gloria* but *grolia,* etc."

Giuseppe Berneri has written an entire poem of twelve cantos, in the popular dialect of Rome, on the subject of Meo-Patacca, and this poem, printed in Rome in 1685, would perhaps have fallen into oblivion if Bartolomeo Pinelli, the Roman draughtsman, had not happened to illustrate it in 1823.

Berneri's poem begins as follows:—"I sing the glory of the bravest young Roman plebeians, the most redoubtable of all the chiefs of their band" ("*Il capo-truppa della gente sgherra*") —which is to say, the chief of the quarrelsome, brawling and more or less assassin troupe.

Meo-Patacca is irritated by the audacity of "these infamous sons of dogs of Turks" who dare to besiege the Christian city of Vienna. He conceives the project of going to its deliverance, and halting before the statue of Mark Antony, "whose hand is raised in sign of triumph," he considers it and says: "Who knows but that one day you will see another statue standing here? Who knows but that a man whom I call *I* will not show himself worthy of the honour?" His companions to the number of ten, who follow as sheep follow their leader, admire him and already bow down before him. He leads them thus through the ruins of ancient Rome, and fires their courage by war-like speech. To drive out the Turk all that he will need, he says, is a company of five hundred young Trasteverins, well armed with arquebuses, pikes, hangers and slings. He would continue to talk to them, but that the company, weary of saying nothing, interrupts his harangues with *Viva Meo-Patacca! Viva!* rendered in tones that might disturb the ashes of the ancient Romans of the Campo Vaccino. Amid the acclamations of the mob, he is carried in triumph to his lodgings.

At the beginning of the second canto, all these heroes are ready to set out. It is the hour at which the grocers, the fruit-sellers and other victuallers, set up upon poles their linen sun-blinds before their shops so as to protect them from the heat which, to the profit of the iced-water sellers, becomes intolerable. It is noon, and Meo-Patacca is surrounded by a crowd of women who loudly give tongue to their despair. They are the more or less legitimate wives of the heroes who are about to follow Patacca. After several speeches he comes triumphant out of this contest, which he considers the most severe he was ever engaged in. Nothing now can arrest his valiant arm. They are about to set out when the news arrives of the deliverance of Vienna by Sobieski. Meo-Patacca is by no means sure that he has not had something to do with the rout of the Turks. He convokes his followers and they deliver themselves to great rejoicings. During this they learn that Bude has been taken by assault by the Christians and that the Jews have united with the Turks to repel the attack. "Vengeance! Vengeance upon the Jews!" This phrase, flung into the middle of the mob, is soon no less than a battle-cry and the entire army of Patacca hurls itself upon the *ghetto*, which it attacks and pillages to the greater honour and glory of God.

It is in the theatre of Palla-Corda, says M. Mercey, that

Meo-Patacca, an epic rather than a dramatic hero, figures in a number of little dramas *à coups de bâton.*

> " But he is no longer quite the malicious fellow of other days. The bravo has changed his costume, his character and his estate. Instead of the *fungo*, the waistcoat and the velvet breeches, with their two lines of silver buttons, he is in foul rags, and occupies, by his patched costume, a middle place between Brighella and Polichinelle."

During his sojourn in Rome in 1740, the Président de Brosses wrote :

> " All the troupes of comedians which I have seen in this country are at least as good as those of Paris. They include characters which we have not ; such as Brighella, the first *Zanni*, who takes the place of Harlequin and wears his mask but with a different costume ; for second *Zanni* they have a sort of ragged Polichinelle, very different from our own, and rather resembling the ancient Pierrot. You could not feel resentment towards him if you saw him in the middle of a synagogue, borrowing money from Jews, who, after having subjected him to a damnable usury, demand of him in addition that he shall become a Jew. It is then that he loses his temper, and with the great cudgel, with which he is armed, belabours them again and again. In a word, they make one laugh. They are excellent comedians playing in wretched comedies."

From the drawings of Pinelli, it is seen that the costumes of Meo-Patacca and Marco-Pepe are very similar. The hair is gathered into a sort of cloth bag ; the neck is naked, although they wear upon their shoulders a sort of scarf which serves for ornament and which is tied in a large rosette upon the breast. A broad girdle once carried a dagger, but weapons having been forbidden, this is now replaced by a stout cudgel. The sleeved waistcoat is buttoned at the side. The breeches are open at the knee as in the time of Berneri; but the garters seem to us more modern as well as the shoes with their steel buckles, which Meo-Patacca can never have worn in the seventeenth century. He wears also the wide-brimmed *fungo* and the mantle.

Pinelli certainly found his types among his friends and compatriots of Trastevere, and Meo-Patacca in the dress we have described has the air rather of a bravo than of a Pulcinella in rags, such as he was but a few years earlier.

vii

In the poem of Berneri, Marco-Pepe is the only one who dares to stand before the face of Meo-Patacca. He plays the rôle of traitor. Meo-Patacca provokes him; they fight; but from the combat Marco-Pepe gets nothing but dishonour.

In the dramas of Palla Corda, Marco-Pepe is the friend and the sympathiser of Meo-Patacca. He seeks to imitate his hero, who walks behind him, for Marco-Pepe is a boaster, a brawling, boisterous fellow, whom one would suppose capable of swallowing everything; his air is very much more terrible than that of his companion; his voice is very much louder; but if Meo-Pattacca becomes angry, or merely clenches his fist, Marco-Pepe disappears as if by enchantment. Meo-Patacca fears nothing; Marco-Pepe fears everything.

These types were still to be seen in Rome in the Emilian

Theatre (Triato Mijani) in the middle of the nineteenth century. Tacconi, a hunchback, leader of the troupe, performed one day in the dialect of the hills, another in the dialect of Trastevere, the pieces of which he was always the author. The dramas or heroic pieces, such as *Hero e Leandro, Francesca da Rimini, Giulietta e Romeo,* were all arranged by him and adapted to the taste of the public.

In *Giulietta e Romeo*, for instance, we find Romeo, dressed after the fashion of Meo-Patacca, wearing a plumed hat, and trailing a great cavalry sabre, replying as follows to Juliette, who has reproached him in no very choice terms with the death of her cousin-german :

"Silence, child, I will make you understand. Know that yesterday, as I was leaving you at the foot of the staircase, I lighted a cigar. At the corner of the street I heard this foul word : 'You are smoking it, you ugly carrion !' (*Te la fumi, brutta carogna*). Having received this insult, I returned at once, I drew my sabre, and . . . but you know the rest, etc."

viii

The Neapolitans have a very popular type which they name IL GUAPO and IL SITONNO (the lad). He represents the popular bully. He is dressed like a Neapolitan of the lower classes, still to be found in certain quarters of the town : a round, wide waistcoat, of cinnamon-coloured cotton velvet, a sort of cap over one ear, light coloured breeches with a red belt round the waist ; he carries a long stick, and struts in an insolent and provocative fashion ; he speaks of nothing but blows, be they of knife, stick, stone or carbine, and he uses an emphasis full of menacing reticences. Nevertheless, although he is not entirely a coward, his deeds correspond but little with his words and, more often than not, his threats and quarrels terminate, not in the shedding of blood, but in the shedding of wine in the nearest tavern.

In the Piovana of Angelo Beolco (Ruzzante), 1530, an amorous young peasant bears the name of Siton. That beyond doubt is the primitive type of *Sitonno*, who again is a type of peasant, but one who has become suburban and denaturalised.

"I can find no difference between a lover and a young calf, to which the herdsman, to amuse himself, shall have bandaged the eyes and thrust a thorn into its tail, so that it runs hither and thither without knowing where it is or whither it is going. I am the calf; love is the herdsman, the thorn is the sorrow which I have in my heart, and the bandage over the eyes is my bewilderment. I do not know whither I am going, for I am not where I am. I am here and my heart and soul are with Nina."

ix

In Bologna the marionette theatres have yet another type which personifies the *facchini*, the young men of the lower class of the town; this Birrichino, according to the annotations of the poem of *Bertoldo Bertoldino e Cacasenno*, is derived from a certain idle and mendicant class, which lives by petty thefts and trickeries, exercising in Bologna a still uglier trade. The word is probably derived from *buricus* of the Latins, or *borrico* (donkey) of the Spaniards, because, like the gypsies, they follow the trade of horse-dealers, mule-shavers and kindred employments.

Birrichino is mocking, jocund and addicted to practical jokes; he never fails to thrust out his leg at the police officer when the latter enters the stage. He is an elusive, agile and lively being, gifted with a pair of legs which would win a coursing prize from a hare. He is never a thief. If he ever abstracts anything it is not that he may profit by it—it is a joke which he plays upon an enemy to discompose him, and compel him to hunt for the missing thing, for Birrichino always ends by restoring it. He is dressed after the fashion of the people of Bologna. It is questionable whether he may be included among the varieties of Polichinelle.

III

THE CAPTAIN

"*Diga usted!* Do you know me? No? You do not know me? Head and Belly! Blood and fire! I am who I am! Italy trembles at the name of Captain Spavento! Spain reverences me under the name of Matamoros, and I terrify France, when I will, under the name of Fracasse—for I can assure you I am a most redoubtable man. All love me and all fear me, in peace as in war. I think no more of chewing up a prince than an onion."

This Captain, with his tiger-cat moustachios, his colossal ruff and his plumed hat, audacious without courage and ostentatious without generosity was born, according to some, on the banks of the Guadalquivir, according to others, on the banks of the Garonne. But he is older than he seems. What should he have done on the banks of either of these rivers in times when they were still inhabited by savage tribes? It was in Athens and in Rome under the Cæsars that he first saw the light. Ever since those days it has been his claim to put whole armies to rout by a stroke of his sword; with a glance he will demolish walls, with a breath overthrow the Alps or the Pyrenees.

He drove the goddesses mad with love of him, and betrayed Mars himself. He has changed his shape in the course of centuries, but not his nature. He is always the same boaster, so mendacious that he imposes even upon himself.

Pyrgopolinices. Let it be seen to that my shield is brighter than is ordinarily the sun in fine weather, so that when I use it in battle, by opposing it to the enemies I shall dazzle and blind them. I burn with desire to comfort this poor sword; she complains that she is downcast at having so long been idle, she who is consumed with impatience to hack the enemy into pieces. But where then is Artotrogus?

Artotrogus (*a parasite*). Here he is: he has the honour to attach himself to a man who is as mighty as he is happy, a man of royal beauty and heroic valour. Not even the god Mars would dare to draw a parallel between himself and you, or to compare with yours his warlike qualities.

Pyrgopolinices. Do you refer to that fellow whom I disdained to overthrow on the field of Gorgonidonia, where Bumbomachides Clytomestoridysarchides, the grandson of Neptune, was the chief commander of the forces?

Artotrogus. I remember the occasion perfectly. You refer to that general whose troops, so remarkable for their gilded armour, you scattered by a single breath from your lips; you scattered them, I say, as the wind scatters leaves and thistledown.

Pyrgopolinices. By the temple of Pollux! that was a trifle. . . .

Artotrogus. By Pollux! I remember how by a single blow of the fist you broke in two the arm of an elephant in India.

Pyrgopolinices. How? The arm?

Artotrogus. No, no: I mean the thigh.

Pyrgopolinices. And yet I struck it but lightly. Do you remember nothing else?

Artotrogus. If I remember! There were a hundred and fifty men in Cilicia; a hundred Cryphiolathronians; thirty Sards and sixty Macedonians, of all of whom you disencumbered the earth in a single day.

Pyrgopolinices. What is the sum total of all those men?

Artotrogus. Seven thousand at least.

Pyrgopolinices. Exactly! I see that you are quick and accurate at figures. As long as you compute me such a number of men killed by my hand you shall never lack for food, and you shall always share my table.

Artotrogus. What should I say of Cappadocia had not the edge of your sword become blunt after you had sliced off the heads of five hundred men! But it was no more than a remainder of infantry! Is it necessary that I should repeat to you what is on the lips of all humanity? There is not, say all mortals, in the whole world but one Pyrgopolinices, who excels in valour, in beauty, in great actions and in heroism. All women love you; and not without reason, faith, since you are of a dazzling beauty; you should have seen the number of ladies who but yesterday plucked at my cloak to question me concerning you.

Pyrgopolinices. What was it that they said? Tell me all. It will give me pleasure.

Artotrogus. One inquired: "Is not that perchance Achilles?" "No," I answered; "it is his brother." Another ejaculated: "How beautiful he is, how shapely and how gracious! Happy the women who enjoy the honour of his choice. Assuredly it were impossible to be too envious of their lot."

Pyrgopolinices. Really now, did they say that?

Artotrogus. Two amongst them implored me to see to it that you should pass their door to-day, as if the mere sight of you were as good as a whole procession, or an enchanted spectacle.

Pyrgopolinices. Confess now that an excess of beauty may often cause chagrin and embarrassment. . . . I think it is time that we repaired to the Forum to pay the soldiers whom yesterday I enrolled. For you are to know that King Seleucus has begged me instantly to raise an army for him, such high confidence does he place in my knowledge and judgment. I have therefore resolved to render to-day this good office to my friend the king.

Artotrogus. Since that is so, let us go.

Pyrgopolinices. Follow me, lackeys; and above all let it be seen that you belong to me. . . . I may boast myself the favourite of Venus. Who knows but that the goddess herself may be enamoured of me?

. . . .

Milphidippa (*a waiting maid*). My Lord Beautiful, I greet you very humbly.

Pyrgopolinices. Who told you my surname? May the gods love you, my child, and may they give you what your heart desires! . . . I do not for a moment doubt but that the girl is in love with me herself.

Milphidippa. All my wish is to spend my life with you, sir.

Pyrgopolinices. You aspire too high! Your pretensions go too far.

Milphidippa. It is not for myself that I speak; it could not please the gods that I should be so daring. I speak for my mistress, who is dying of love for you.

Pyrgopolinices. There are many others besides her who desire the same happiness and may not attain to it. But who is your mistress? For I am pestered by such a number of women that I cannot remember them all. . . . Speak out, then. Tell me what you want, little love-messenger.

Milphidippa. Ah! my famous Achilles, lend an ear to my prayer; grant what I ask of you; generously save a loving and a beautiful woman. Draw upon your heroic heart for some sentiments of softness, of tenderness and of compassion. Do that, O great demolisher of cities, illustrious slayer of kings.

Pyrgopolinices. By Hercules, this becomes tiresome and importunate. (*To his lackey.*) How often have I forbidden you to promise thus easily and commonly my services to ladies?

Palæstrio (*lackey*). None but brave warriors are born of the woman whom he honours with his love; and his children live at least eight hundred years.

Milphidippa. Misfortune catch thee, fool and mocker!

Pyrgopolinices. He is not mocking you. My children live a thousand years by computations made from the first century to the last.

Palæstrio. I was afraid to state their number lest this child should have thought that I was indulging in a gross and impudent falsehood.

PYRGOPOLINICES. Do you know, child, that I was born on the morrow of that memorable day on which the goddess Ops gave birth to Jupiter ?

PALÆSTRIO. That is the fact, and if the lord my master had arrived but one day earlier, the empire of the heavens would have been his.

After all his boast and brag of his exploits he is seized by the scullions of Periplectomene, receives from them an ignominious correction, and departs beaten, yet satisfied.

PERIPLECOMENUS (*to his lackeys*). Bring him away ; if he won't follow you carry him. Bear him between heaven and earth, or else tear him into pieces, cut him into shreds.

PYRGOPOLINICES. Oh ! my Lord Periplecomenus, I implore you in the name of Hercules !

PERIPLECOMENUS. There is no Hercules to help you ; your prayer is useless. See, Cario, if your knife is sharp.

PYRGOPOLINICES. I am lost, I am dead !

CARIO (*a scullion*). Not yet, you say that too soon ! (*To his master.*) Shall I get to work, sir ? Shall I commence the operation ?

PERIPLECOMENUS. No, first I want him beaten back and front.

CARIO. I will set my hand to it with the best will. (*He strikes.*)

PYRGOPOLINICES. Mercy ! mercy, I implore you ! you have beaten me enough.

CARIO (*to his master*). Shall I cut ? Shall I carve ? Shall I set my knife to the business ?

PYRGOPOLINICES. My lord, before he does so, before he opens my belly, have compassion to hear me. . . .

CARIO. It would be best to let him experience another shower of blows and then show him the door and give him his dismissal.

PYRGOPOLINICES. May the gods bless you, who plead so well in my favour! In truth this cudgelling has entirely softened me; I am metamorphosed into a lamb; let me go, I implore you.

PERIPLECOMENUS. Unbind him.

PYRGOPOLINICES. I am most deeply indebted! I thank you with all my heart.

(*The Braggart Captain.* PLAUTUS.)

The modern Captain's utterances are very similar:

"To-day some lackeys, finding me alone, belaboured me with cudgels—an affront which put me in such a passion that I devoured the walls of a bastion. At last, swollen with vexation, rancour, rage and fury, I broke Fortune on the wheel, scourged Hazard and burned Misfortune."

You see him strutting in the sun along the flagstones of a palace, his nose in the air, his eye on the trail of roast meat, his hand on his terrible rapier, dangerous only to the eyes of those who follow him. To see him bestride the ground you would suppose that the whole earth belongs to him; that if he wished he could overthrow the buildings by a flick. But he is magnanimous. How many insults and canings has he not permitted to fall into oblivion?

It is night! Who goes there? A rival beyond doubt. The Captain will fell him with a glance. No! He despises him too much; he does not consider it worth while; the man is but a simple mortal after all! If it were Jupiter now! We should see fine things. Not one but two men are approaching, and their gait is peculiar. Let him withdraw; it is the more generous behaviour towards these poor fellows who might die of terror at the simple sight of him. "Thus I save their lives," adds our hero, stretching out his long legs until they look like a pair of compasses and accelerating his walk until it almost becomes a flight.

But at the corner of the street a shower of cudgel blows falls suddenly upon the shoulders of this demi-god. He is knocked down; rogues and vagabonds hasten to strip him of his riches. The famous coat of mail, fashioned out of the gold rings which his many mistresses have compelled him to accept, might have tempted these poor rascals; but, alas! under his slashed doublet, which they disdain, not so much as a shirt do they find. "We are robbed!" says one of the miscreants to his companions, and they vanish, despising their victim.

Hearing no further sound the Captain opens first one eye and then the other, raises his head, recognises that the danger is past, readjusts his rapier and turns his steps to other hunting grounds.

> "Ce capitan fait grand éclat :
> Et sa valeur est si parfaite,
> Qu'il est des derniers au combat,
> Et des premiers à la retraite."

"The Captain," says M. Frédéric Mercey, "antedates the Spanish dominion; we consider him the contemporary of all those formidable leaders of Italian bands who distinguished themselves at Anghiari and in those famous encounters in which a horse, by turning its head or its tail, might suffice to bring about the loss or gain of a battle. It is Macchiavelli who assures us of this.

"Under the new masters (*i.e.* the Spaniards) the Captain is transformed into *Matamoros*; he jabbers in Castilian, assumes the stateliness of Spain, and corrects as far as possible his poltroonery. Not a day passes now on which he does not slay a Moor, confound a necromancer or seduce a princess. His lackey's garments are made from the material of the turbans of the infidels whom he has decapitated.

" To-day, after having undergone a further transformation, he still loves to entertain us with his prowess. One day, at the siege of Trébizonde, he penetrated alone into the tent of the Sultan, and, seizing him by the beard, he dragged him through the camp, whilst with his disengaged hand, he held off his assailants and compelled the entire infidel army to keep its distance. When he entered the city his cuirass bristled so with arrows that he might have been mistaken for a hedgehog. The hedgehog device on his coat of arms dates from that event. . . .

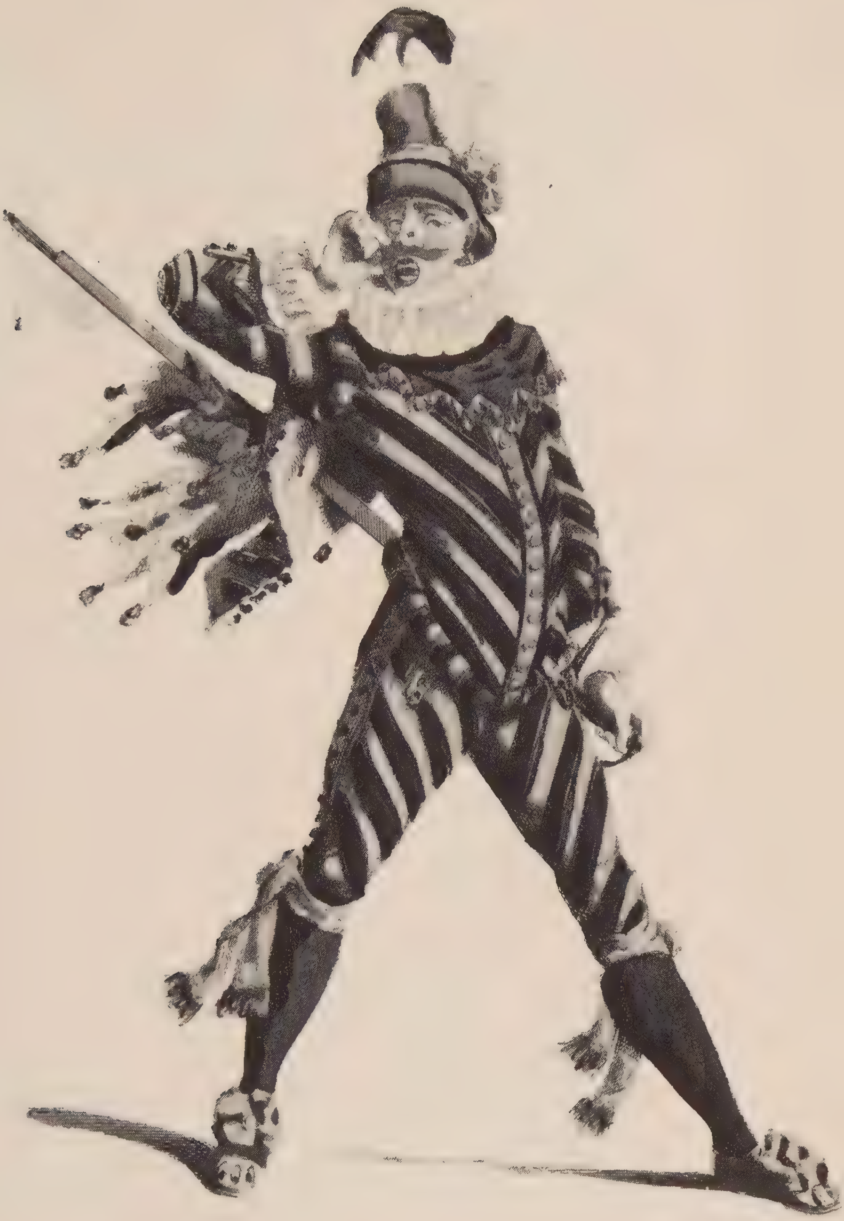
" His gallantry equals his valour, and when beauty is the object of his onslaught he has such marvellous means of conquest that he never finds her unyielding. He overthrows towers, bursts through iron doors or, like a Greek god, descends upon her in the form of a golden rain. Many of his feats of gallantry have found imitators. Once, for instance, when he galloped along the banks of the Garigliano in the company of the princess Gilyme d'Apremont, she, being weary of his amorous insistence, said in jest : ' The fire that consumes my knight is very ardent then ? '

" ' Cruel, can you doubt it ? '

" ' Not at all, but I know a means of relieving you. Fling yourself into the river.'

" ' Not all these waters could extinguish my flame.'

" ' That is but a gallant figure of speech ; and I shall not



believe it until I see you issuing from those waves still consumed by the same love.'

"'Is that so, beautiful princess?' he cries, whereupon the intrepid lover drives spurs into the flanks of his charger and leaps into the middle of the river.

"He ran great risk of drowning, and it was only by abandoning his horse that he was able to regain the shore with the water streaming from him, but still devoured by the same fire. The princess kept her word and rewarded so noble a devotion.

"Like the Captains his ancestors, Matamoros was magnificent in words, but his purse was always empty and under his beautiful richly damascened cuirass he wore but a frayed and tattered leather jerkin."

The tradition of the theatre informs us that this rôle of Matamoros made the fortune of *L'Illusion Comique.*[1] The Captain's formidable boasts and his piteous discomfiture had a comic interest which can scarcely be fully appreciated by us. Boastfulness reigned then in court and town, and even in the Academy; it may almost be said that it had passed into French manners. In witness to this may be cited the illustrious Scudéry, who held his pen in one hand and his sword in the other whilst challenging Corneille to single combat, so as to prove to him that *Le Cid* was a detestable tragedy; or again that admirable eccentric named Cyrano de Bergerac. Cyrano at least was of no false courage; but if his valour produced high deeds, in what an extraordinary mass of fanfaronading gasconnades were they not served up. Corneille, to give words to his character, needed no more than to translate into verse the prose of this great duellist.

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[1] See the dialogue between Clindor and Matamore, etc., etc., in P. Corneille's *L'Illusion Comique.*

"It would be necessary, I think, sir, that God should accomplish something as miraculous as the wish of Caligula if he would make an end of my quarrels. If the entire human race were assembled under a single head, or when but one should remain of all living men, there would still be one duel left for me. In truth it must be that your departure having made a desert of Paris the grass is spreading in every street, since wherever I go I find myself always on a lawn. Sometimes I conceive that I am become a hedgehog; since no one may approach me without being pricked. Had you not also noticed that there is at present more shadow on the horizon than at the time of your departure? It is because, since then, my hand has so peopled hell that it regurgitates upon the earth."

In the encounter in hell between Gaultier Garguille and Tabarin, Gaultier Garguille says:

"If you were still in the other world you would split your sides with laughter to see the proud folk of to-day who, striding superbly hand on hip, like pots with handles, moustachiously disdain all whom they meet, whilst their fulminating swords are filling all graveyards; and, what is still worse, by their eyes, glowering fiercely under a trailing plume, they cause Jupiter to tremble until he is on the point of abandoning to them his lightning and his eagle, that he may have peace, and this notwithstanding that they inspire fear in none but snails and flies and frogs."

THE CAPTAIN

No type was so successful in Europe in the sixteenth century, and more particularly at the beginning of the seventeenth, as that of the Captain, both in improvised and in written comedy. In Italy, Spain, France and England, the number of pieces in which the Captain, under very different names, played the principal rôle was very considerable. Scarron wrote round this character a sort of *tour de force* in verse in one act and in one rhyme—*ment*—entitled *Les Boutades du Capitan Matamore*, 1646 :

MATAMORE

J'ai de l'amour infiniment
Pour un bel œil qui, puissamment,
Me trouble impérieusement ;
Il demeure en ce logement,
Marchons-y délicatement.
Holà ! sortez hâtivement,
Sinon, parbleu ! robustement
J'écraserai le bâtiment.

ANGÉLIQUE

Hé ! que frappe si rudement !

MATAMORE

C'est un faiseur d'égorgement.

The first Italian Captains date from the fifteenth century, and their costumes have varied according to their epochs. At first they wore buff jackets, a long sword, a steel helmet or morion, and they were always masked. These masks were flesh-coloured, with a prominent nose and terrific moustachios.

"The ancient Italian Captain," says L. Riccoboni, "was succeeded by the Spanish Captain, who dressed himself in the fashion of his country. Little by little the Spanish Captain overthrew the ancient Italian Captain. At the time of the passage of Charles V. into Italy this character was introduced into the French theatre. Its novelty earned it the suffrages of the public; our Italian Captain was silenced and the Spanish Captain remained master of the battlefield. It was his character to be boastful; but he was destined in the end to receive a cudgelling from Harlequin."

In Italy and in France the Captains bear such Hispaniolised names as: el Capitano Sangre y Fuego, el Capitano Cuerno de Cornazan, el Capitano Escobombardon della Papirotonda, el Capitano Rodomonte, el Capitano Parafante.

The Germans in the seventeenth century also had their Captain, *Horribilicribrifax*, who was but a copy of the Milanese Captain Spavento, the Castilian Matamoros, and the French Capitaine Fracasse.

In the sixteenth century the Capitan Spezza-Monti, known in France under the name of Tranche-Montagne, "closed his eyes when fighting his enemies, so as not to see their severed limbs as he sliced them off."

Callot, in his *Petits Danseurs*, shows us some of these Italian Captains of the sixteenth century; among others is the Capitan Taglia-Cantoni, dressed in tight garments, wearing an enormously plumed hat, and shod in cannon boots, adorned with lace on the inside. His Captain Zerbino is distinguished by a triumphant panache and a mask adorned with spectacles. His Captain Cerimonia is represented with one leg advanced, and his hand on his rapier, so that, entirely thrusting up his cloak behind, the point of it menaces heaven. He is extremely ceremonious as is indicated by his name. Meeting Signora Lavinia (Diana Ponti), he seems to be bending a soft glance upon her through his mask, and he is in the act of doffing his slashed hat. The Captains Mala-Gamba and Bella-Vita, both knock-kneed, are saluting each other with precaution and defiance. They wear enormous ruffs and exaggerated garters on the outsides of their boots. Their sleeves and breeches are slashed after the fashion of the time of François I. The Captains Cardoni, Babeo Esgangarato, Cocodrillo and Grillo, wear the costume of dancers.

ii

In the Italian troupe of the *Gelosi* which went to France in 1577, the rôles of Captain were played under the name of Capitano Spavento della Valle Inferna (Captain Terror of the Vale of Hell), by Francesco Andreini, born at Pistoia, and already well known in Italy since 1558. He played all known musical instruments, and spoke six languages—Italian, French, Spanish, Slav, Greek and Turkish. He performed the parts of Doctors and Captains equally well, and he created the character of the Dottore Siciliano and that of a magician named Talcirone. On his return to Florence in 1578 he met in this same troupe Isabella, who was then sixteen years of age, and greatly admired for her beauty, her talents and her virtue. Francesco Andreini fell in love with her and married her. In the following year, 1579, Isabella, who was still in Florence, gave birth to a son, Gian Battista Andreini, known later on under the name of Lelio, and author of the *Teatro Celeste* and *L'Adamo*. Andreini went again to France in 1600, with the second troupe of *Gelosi*, still under the direction of Flaminio

Scala ; but as the troupe was returning to Italy, Isabella died suddenly at Lyons (1604). Sorrow-stricken and inconsolable, Francesco Andreini quitted the theatre with his son ; the latter, however, went back to it in the capacity of director in the following year. Andreini the elder never returned to the stage, nor concerned himself further with his art save as an author. He produced, in 1607, *Le Bravure del Capitano Spavento*, which was translated into French under the title of *Bravacheries du Capitaine l'Epouvante*. Francesco Andreini was a member of the Società degli Spensierati of Florence.

Whilst a comedian in the troupe of Flaminio Scala he was the author of the preface of Scala's book, which contains some fifty scenarii. His son, Gian Battista Andreini, discharged the rôles of juvenile lovers under the name of Lelio, as we shall see.

Francesco Andreini died in 1624.

Fabrizio de Fornaris, a gentleman of Naples, born in 1560, was renowned for his comic spirit and his wit under the name of Capitan Cocodrillo. He went to France with the troupe of the *Confidenti* in 1584 and 1585. He caused *La Fiammella*, a pastoral play by Bartolomeo Rossi, to be performed by his comrades, and he published it in 1584. In the following year he published a comedy of his own, entitled *Angelica*, which had been performed impromptu, scoring considerable success, particularly at the house of the Duke of Joyeuse, to whom it was dedicated. Fabrizio de Fornaris returned to Italy, and died there in 1637.

In 1618, the charlatan Mondor, born at Milan, who performed his farces on the trestles of the Place Dauphine with his associate Tabarin, played the rôles of Captain in certain Tabarinic farces, under the name of Rodomonte, an anagram upon his own name. As all the world knows, it was Ariosto who first gave to the world the terrible Saracen Captain Rodomonte.

> RODOMONT. Cavaliers, musketeers, bombards, canons, morions, corslets! Hither, comrades! I am Captain Rodomont, the bravery, the valour of all the world; my sword has been triumphant throughout the whole universe.
>
> TABARIN. It is true, by my faith; there is none who can ply a two-legged sword better than he.
>
> RODOMONT. What are you doing in this house, Tabarin? What are you doing, coward? I want to speak to you. Hither, coward! Hither, pig! I want to kill you! Be dead![1]

Mondor was a man of handsome presence, who expressed himself extremely well, and who had received a good education, as may be judged from the lessons in science and philosophy which he delivered to his public in the form of dialogues with his lackey Tabarin.

In the *Opuscules Tabariniques* is the following passage:—

"Mondor is a kind of wit and a man of some letters, capable if he should wish it of a more honourable vocation. He is well-bred and courteous, removing his hat very gracefully and with a gentle smile when he returns a handkerchief or a glove."

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[1] Mondor's diction in these performances in Paris was an extraordinary mixture of French, Italian and Spanish, which it is only possible to appreciate by a glimpse at the original:

"RODOMONT. Cavallières, mousquetadères, bombardas, canones, morions, corseletes! Aqui, veillaco! . . . Son il Capitanio Rodomonté, la bravura, la valore de todo el mondo; la mia spada s'est rendue triomphante del toto universo.

"TABARIN. Il est vray, par ma foy; il n'y a personne qui joue mieux de l'espée à deux jambes que luy.

"RODOMONT. Que fasto en sta casa, Tabarin? Que fasto veillaco? Io te quero ablar. . . . Aqui, veillacon? Aqui, poerco? Io te quero matar, eres moerto!"

In the troupe of the *Fedeli*, which came to Paris in 1621 and again in 1624 under the direction of G. B. Andreini, the rôles of Captain were played by Girolamo Gavarini, of Ferrara, known in the theatre as *Capitano Rinoceronte* (Captain Rhinoceros).

Niccolo Barbieri (Beltrame) relates in his *Supplica* the death of this comedian on the 2nd October 1624, and says that upon his body was found " a very coarse hair-shirt, which occasions some surprise, for whilst we were well aware that he was pious and devout, we had no suspicion that he went to such lengths as this." He adds that " people should not risk inconsiderately to speak evil of comedians, remembering that frequently there are very honourable men in their ranks and, better still, even saints at times, such as Saint Genest, Saint Ardélion, Saint Sylvain and San Giovanni Buono."

Abraham Bosse performed the part of Matamoros from the beginning of the seventeenth century, armed to the teeth, in slashed and tight-fitting garments, and under a plumed hat of grey felt, similar to that worn by Spavento.

iii

CAPTAIN SPEZZAFER wore at first the costume of a gentleman of the court of Henry IV., a round, plumed hat, beard and moustachios, a heavy ruff and doublet, and very wide breeches, in keeping with the mode of the period. But in 1668 he modified the shape of his costume ; and his manner of wearing the sword, very high up and suspended from a wide leather belt, gave him a certain similarity with Crispin of the French comedy. The colours he affected, however, were very different. Whilst Crispin is dressed from head to foot in black velvet, Spezzafer is arrayed in heavy silk of a bright yellow; his garments are cut after the fashion of those of soldiers of a few years earlier, under Louis XIII. He wears moustachios and a grey cocked hat, surmounted by a feather.

Spezzafer, whose name was Giuseppe Bianchi, was first seen in Paris in 1639, and again in 1645, with the troupe whose director he was and whose principal actors were the following:—Barbançois (*Polichinelle*), Bastona, Bonnetti, Caluci, Cialace (*Pantaloon*), Bonami (*dancer*), Franchi, Grandini, Micael Lardi, Merli, Magni, Nardo, Nicoli, Pozzi, Rinaldi, Usili; Mesdames Brigida Bianchi, Orsola Bianchi, Luigia Bianchi, Gambelli, Marizini, etc.

He died in Paris in 1680.

"His death being a subject of conversation at Versailles, M***, a doctor, claimed to resemble him; but the Prince of *** assured him of the contrary, upon the grounds that the Captain had never killed anybody. This Spezzafer was married to a woman of very equivocal conduct, and when in the comedy of *Arlequin Roi par Hasard* he came to solicit the governorship of a place on the frontier, Harlequin would answer him: 'How should you be able to govern it, you, who in twenty years have never succeeded in governing your wife?' No doubt this pleasantry never failed to provoke the laughter of the public, but it must have been very bitter to him who was its butt."

In one of Gherardi's plays Captain Spavento finds it necessary to purchase underclothing. It is what we may call a *scène intime*, for it is not customary to see Captains acting like simple mortals; they are always tuned to a diapason far too high ever to permit them to descend to the necessities of existence.

"It is said," Harlequin tells him, "that you do not wear a shirt."

"That was once my custom," replies the Captain, "because then, being of an extremely furious nature, when once I was enraged, the hair of my body, which was abundant, stood up, piercing my shirt on every side, and putting so many holes in it that one might have taken it for a colander. But having become much more moderate since then, I now wear underclothing like any other fellow."

After the departure of Harlequin Spezzafer approaches a shop.

SPEZZAFER. Now here, opportunely, is a linen shop. Let me see if they keep what I require.

A SEMPSTRESS. Sir, we have very beautiful Dutch linen and other things.

SPEZZAFER (*taking up a shirt from the counter*). I shall be delighted to buy something from you. (*Aside.*) This girl is pretty, well made, and her eyes are blue. (*Aloud.*) This shirt would do very well for me, but I think it is too small.

THE SEMPSTRESS. Too small! you cannot think that. It is three quarters and a half long.

SPEZZAFER. How much do you want for it?

THE SEMPSTRESS. It will cost you ten ducats, not to overcharge you.

SPEZZAFER. Ten ducats!

THE SEMPSTRESS. Yes, sir. I make only a livre on each sou.

SPEZZAFER. I will give you thirty sous.

THE SEMPSTRESS. Thirty sous! It is easily seen you're not used to wearing shirts.

Spezzafer. There! There is a ducat, not to haggle further. Do not compel me to go elsewhere.

The Sempstress. Oh, very well, take it then, on condition that you will do me the honour to come again. This is the sign of *La Pucelle*.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the costume of the Italian Captain resembles that of a soldier of the time. He wears a three-cornered hat, long hair tied in a queue, and coat, waistcoat and breeches of military cut. The long sword which he carries pointing upwards gives him still a little of the air of his ancestors.

iv

Giangurgolo—which is to say Jack Glutton—is the Calabrian type of Captain. Like Matamoros he is passionately devoted to women; but he is frightened of them; he is always afraid of discovering a man under the petticoat. Nevertheless he carries the great sword of the Captain and has adopted his soldierly gait. Like his primitive type he is boastful, a monstrous liar, timid beyond all measure, and moreover as famished as a savage. Yet he will go four days without eating for fear of meeting with a rebuff, which would make it necessary for him to become angry and perhaps to fight—in other words, to be beaten. Thus he has recourse to theft to nourish himself, because he never has a farthing. He prowls about the stalls of the macaroni merchants; lifting up his great cardboard nose, he sniffs and nourishes himself upon the smell of the edibles. If by good fortune he can put his hand upon victuals, it is amusing to see the quantity whose disappearance he can contrive. His stomach is a gulf. But, for the sake of a few pounds of macaroni, a few dishfuls of polenta, one or two *salami*, how much shame must he not endure! He is a compound of Gargantua, Matamoros and Pierrot. He is, moreover, foolish and vain and proclaims himself a Sicilian gentleman. "The earth," he says, "trembles under me when I march."

The members of the watch are a terror to him. He has a guilty conscience, and at their approach, notwithstanding his titles, his nobility and his redoubtable arms, he could gladly squeeze into a rat-hole. When he is quite certain that he is dealing only with poor inoffensive people he causes himself to be served on a grand scale, and repays them by enraging furiously. If in the moment of his fury a child to amuse itself should shout out behind him, he will disappear so quickly and for so long that years may pass before he is seen again in the country. He wears a long and pointed felt hat, a rapier, a scarlet doublet whose sleeves, matching his breeches, are of pale yellow striped with red. Francesco Ficoroni (in his *Dissertatio de larvis scenicis et figuris comicis*) gives the reproduction of an ancient mime engraved upon onyx, which very much resembles Giangurgolo in headdress, long nose and ungainly posture.

V

IL VAPPO, or Smargiasso (fanfaron), is a Neapolitan type, representing the spadassin of the end of the eighteenth century. He is a great brawler, an excessive boaster, and above all an incredible poltroon, like the other varieties of the Captain. He wears an ample square-cut riding-coat, a three-cornered hat of an exaggerated height, yellow breeches and a long rapier, whose old and rusty hilt rattles as he moves. He is a clumsy, awkward fellow, striking terrific postures, a Franca-Trippa of Callot, dressed in a slightly more modern manner.

vi

The Romans also have a sort of Captain, ROGANTINO, who has the same manners and the same character as their Marco-Pepe. In Bologna the Corporal Rogantino is the chief officer of the watch; he is brutal, speaks with a bizarre accent, vibrating his *r*s, and, when he has to effect an arrest, if the guilty escape him he will often seize an innocent man; should anyone attempt to hinder him, he wants to strike and incarcerate everybody.

His scenes conclude in a general mêlée from which Rogantino issues invariably in a pitiable condition. "They have beaten me," he says, "but I told them what I thought of them." This character is preserved in Rome to this day, together with Pulcinella and Cassandrino, as one of the heroes of the marionette booth.

IV

COLUMBINE

In the *Mostellaria* of Plautus, Philematium, a musician, has for waiting-woman a certain Scapha, who converses with her in terms very similar to those in which Diamantine converses with Aurelia, or Columbine with Isabella. In the following scene we are permitted to be present at the toilet of a woman of antiquity.

PHILEMATIUM. See, I beg you, Scaphe, whether this gown suits me. For it is my aim to please Philolaches, who is at once my lover and my master.

SCAPHA. Why do you not seek to acquire provoking ways, since in yourself you are entirely lovely ? Lovers do not care for a woman's gowns, but for what they contain.

PHILEMATIUM. And now what do you say ?

SCAPHA. Concerning what ?

PHILEMATIUM. Look at me closely and you will agree that this gown improves my beauty.

SCAPHA. The force of your beauty is greater and carries more influence than your raiment. All that you put on borrows grace and value from yourself.

PHILEMATIUM. I do not want you to flatter me.

SCAPHA. If I dared, my dear mistress, I should say that you are very foolish, since you prefer to be wrongly criticised rather than to be justly praised. Strange taste ! As for myself—by Pollux ! I would rather receive praise which I do not deserve than reproaches for faults of which I am aware.

PHILEMATIUM. I detest people who seek to please me by falsehood. If you find me wanting in anything, have the goodness to correct me.

Scapha. I certainly think that you act grossly against your interests when you give yourself entirely to Philolaches. You count upon none but him; you are so submissive, complaisant and obedient to this young man that all other lovers count for nothing with you; it does not become a courtesan to have but one intrigue; she should leave that to ladies of high degree.

Philematium. Since my dear lover has delivered me from shameful bondage I do no more than my duty in showing him a hundred times more tenderness than when I flattered him to obtain what he has done for me.

Scapha. In that case consider him as a husband in conscience and in honour as well as in tenderness and, upon that footing, allow your hair to grow like that of a married woman.[1]

Philematium. See whether my headdress is well arranged. Give me my white.

Scapha. What for ?

Philematium. To rub it into my cheeks to beautify me.

Scapha. It is like whitening ivory with soot.

Philematium. Give me also my rouge (*purpurismum*).

Scapha. With these colours you are about to spoil the most beautiful work of nature. Confine yourself to the bright tints of your youth. You require no white-lead nor rouge of Melos nor any other sort of plaster.

Philematium. Do you not think that I should do well to rub myself with scent, and to perfume myself ?

Scapha. Beware of doing it ! A woman smells best when she smells of nothing, for what can be thought of those women who perfume themselves, and proclaim themselves by their scents ? They are treated as toothless hags, who seek to disguise themselves under paint and perfume.

Philematium. Consider well my long robe and my jewels. Do you find me well adorned ? Does everything suit me ?

---

[1] Courtesans did not allow their hair to grow, so that they might dress in male attire when the fancy took them. But those who were faithful to their lovers retained long hair as a sign of the propriety of their conduct.

SCAPHA. It is not for me to judge; it is Philolache's taste alone that is to be consulted on that subject. Purple is convenient for dissembling age, and as for gold, it suits no woman.

ii

From the flattering, cynical and corrupted slave was born in the Italian theatre the *servetta* or *fantesca*, a confidential waiting-maid, known later in France as the *soubrette*, a character confounded with that of sophisticated and malicious village girls. As early as 1528 we find women playing this rôle in the lively and noteworthy comedies of Angelo Beolco (Ruzzante) performed at the theatre of Padua. She is called Betta and Bettia (for Elisabetta), Gnua (for Genoveffa), Gitta (for Gianetta), Nina, Besa, etc. Usually these are peasant women, who betray their husbands or their lovers for very little, " a piece of bread or a ribbon," or even, very often, merely out of a spirit of mischief. Thus Bettia is enclosed with her lover Tonin, a man-at-arms, and speaks from the window to Ruzzante, her husband, who bids her open the door and return home with him, in which case he will forgive her fault.

" I care nothing about your forgiveness; I do not need it. At home it is I who have to labour and I am sick of it. Whilst you are glued to a chair and never do anything I must set my hands to everything. Go and seek another servant to clean your pots and pans, and to do your house-work. Do you think that I, who am as fresh and lively as a fish, shall submit to having no society but yours? I am here, and here I remain. I am sorry about your honour; but you have brought this upon yourself."

In 1530 we find waiting-women in the troupe of the *Intronati* under the names of Columbina, Oliva, Fiametta, Pasquella, Nespola and Spinetta. But the most famous actress in this line was Silvia Roncagli, born at Bergamo, who, under the name of Franceschina, went to France in the troupe of the *Gelosi* in 1578. She returned to Italy with that company and played in Florence the rôles of waiting-woman to Isabella (Isabella Andreini). She spoke French perfectly, and at times permitted herself entirely French improvisations. The soubrette in the troupe of the *Fedeli*, which went to Paris with G. B. Andreini, still bore the name of Franceschina.

The wife of Tabarin, who improvised on the trestles of the Place Dauphine, assumed also the same *nom de guerre*. L'Etoile claims that she was Italian ; he is certainly confusing her with Silvia Roncagli. Her real name was Anne Begot, and her reputation was much better than was supposed, for the stupid people of Paris took the farces and the follies which she uttered literally as being expressions of herself.

iii

Patricia Adami, born at Rome in 1635, was known under the name of DIAMANTINA. She played first in Italy and later in France. In 1600, after the decease of her husband, Adami, a comedian who died young, she made her first appearance in Paris, and her versatile talents caused the public very quickly to forget the actress who had preceded her in 1653, summoned to France by Cardinal Mazarin. Of the latter no more than her theatre-name of Beatrix is known, and this from the quatrain of Foret :

> "Mais pour enchanter les oreilles,
> Pâmer, pleurer, faire merveilles,
> Mademoiselle *Béatrix*
> Emporta, ce jour-là, le prix."

Patricia Adami was of slight stature and rather brown of skin, but extremely pretty, and of a great vivacity on the stage. Agostino Lolli, who played the parts of Doctor, fell in love with her and they were married. She continued her successes and persevered in her employment until a younger star rose to eclipse her—that is to say, until the debut of Caterina Biancolelli (Columbine). In 1683, Diamantina, having grown old, withdrew altogether from the theatre.

iv

The type of soubrette remains always the same. From the days of Plautus to those of Gherardi, and from those of Gherardi down to our own, it has undergone but little variation; but the soubrette became personified in the character of COLUMBINE by Teresa, Caterina and the second Teresa Biancolelli —grandmother, granddaughter and great-granddaughter. The most remarkable of the three by her versatile talent and her numerous creation is Caterina Biancolelli, daughter of the famous Domenico, and wife of Pierre Lenoir de la Thorillière, a pupil of Molière's and a distinguished actor in his company.

She is sometimes soubrette, sometimes mistress, advocate, dancer, singer and swaggering gallant. It is said of her that she filled with equal ease all rôles, and that she spoke fluently several languages, dialects and jargons. She appears to have been a very well-educated woman of real talent. "She was small and brunette, but of a very comely countenance. She had more than beauty ; she had physiognomy, a fine air, easy gesture and a sweet and pleasant voice." Born in 1665 of Giuseppe-Domenico Biancolelli and Ursula Corteze (known in the theatre under the name of Eularia), she took the surname of Columbina, a surname which had been in vogue in the theatre since 1560 ; her paternal grandmother had already borne it and had been painted in walking costume, holding a basket containing two doves (*colombes*) in allusion to this her stage name. This portrait was preserved in the house inhabited by Domenico in the village of Bièvre, near Paris.

Caterina made her début on the 11th October 1863, in *Arlequino Protèo*. She came on and in Italian addressed her father who was playing Harlequin : "I was told that your lordship desired to speak with me. But what a droll figure is your lordship's ! You have the air of a turkey-cock."

"How ? Of a turkey-cock ?" replied Harlequin ; "I am the chief comedian of a troupe of turkey-cocks—I mean of a troupe of comedians. But I sent for you because I know that you have great talent for comedy, and I am going to give you a rôle in *The Burning of Troy* : I will represent the horse, you shall represent the fire," etc. Columbine rejects the piece, which, she says, would end in smoke and hurt the eyes of the spectators. Choice is made of *The Loves of Titus and Berenice*. Columbine announces that she is going to *imberenice* herself (imberenicciarmi), and Harlequin goes off to *titusine* himself (intitusinarmi).

She scored a great success, and from the moment of her début she gave a free rein to her wit and audacity in improvisation. As soubrette to Isabella she remonstrates with her mistress, who is desolated at the prospect of marrying a man whom she does not love.

"You will live" (she tells her) "as live the majority of wives in Paris. In the first four or five years you will be prodigal, and then when you shall have consumed the greater part of your husband's fortune in moveables, gowns, equipages and jewels, you will part company with him; your marriage-portion will be returned to you, and you will live thereafter as a great lady. How simple you are! Do you think rich men are married to be loved?"

Elsewhere she deals in home truths with her master:

"Quite frankly, sir, if you do not take care, you will, for all your millions, become the laughing-stock of Paris. It is well known that there is no man, be he great or little, who has not sometimes something in his head; but it is a shame to see you without occupation, lamenting your life and haggling from morning to night about the merest necessities of the house! Alas! for the days of your extravagance, when nothing was talked of but your ostentation and good humour. Whenever you returned from town you would always chat with me for a moment, your hand under my chin. It was Columbine here, Columbine there; now a ribbon, now a ring, now a fan. In short one had, now and again, some little mark of your remembrance. Now you come home a hundred times without once saying: 'God keep you.' You never cease from grumbling, you become as ugly as yellow lard, as cantankerous as a devil. Of your fifty lackeys you have dismissed fifteen; there remain only three coaches here, and

I think—God forgive me!—that you retrench your wife's expenditure in dress."

On the subject of coquetry, Columbine thus admonishes Isabella :

"Things must never be allowed to go to extremes. But I assure you that a little pinch of coquetry scattered through the manners of a woman, renders her a hundred times more lovable and desirable. I but repeat the words of my mother, who was a marvellously well-informed woman on this subject. I have heard her say a hundred times that it is with coquetry as with vinegar: when too much is put into the sauce it becomes sharp and detestable; when it contains too little it is so faint as not to be tasted; but when you achieve that mediocrity which arouses appetite, it will induce you to eat your very fingers. It is the same with woman. When she is coquettish at the expense of her honour, fie, fie! that is not worth a devil. When she is not coquettish at all, that is still worse; her virtue seems confounded with her temperament, and you would suppose her merely a lethargic beauty. But when a beautiful woman has just so much sparkle as is required to please, faith, if I were a man, that should tell with me."

In *Le Banqueroutier* to prove to Isabella that her heart is more tender than she cares to confess, this is what she imagines:

Columbine. Bring me a mantle, a scarf, a wig and a hat belonging to mademoiselle's brother. I will beguile our leisure by counterfeiting one of these sighing lovers.

Isabella. But what shall I call you ?

Columbine. You shall call me "Chevalier." And be on your guard, for, faith, I shall press you closely. You laugh ? Had God but made a man of me I should have been a dangerous rogue. (*She goes out, to return dressed as a man.*) Faith ! mademoiselle, it is not without trouble that one penetrates to your apartments. If your brutal porter but wore laced breeches he would be taken for a Swiss. Do you know that I have spent literally two hours at your door, and that this rascal would not have consented to open if it had not occurred to me to tell him that I am a relative of yours ? Count me a rascal if I do not speak the truth. By the way, have I told you that I love you ?

Isabella. That statement has not yet reached me.

Columbine. We men of feeling are sometimes so inattentive that it is necessary to guess our meaning. I find you most touchingly blossoming.

Isabella. Fie ! Chevalier, you must not look at me. I am not personable to-day. These last two nights I have been so ill that I have not closed an eye. You will understand that one may not be beautiful after such a defeat to one's health.

Columbine. You have, perdition catch me, more health than I have need of. My only fear is lest your illness should be of the heart. Lovable as you are it is not possible that you should not bear some passion in your soul. Should it be so, conceal it from me, for I would sooner that five hundred devils should seize me than——

Isabella. How, Chevalier ! Are you jealous ?

Columbine. As the devil ! My beautiful, will you compel me to sigh for ever ? When will you sup with me, chez Lamy ?

Isabella. Chevalier ! You are wanting in respect. A lady of my quality in a tavern !

Little by little Columbine becomes impassioned and plays so well her rôle of a lover that Isabella sighs : "Alas, Columbine ! what a pity that you are not a boy !"

Columbine is frank, and calls all things by their proper name.

But if at times her mistress does not listen to her she pretends that she desires to quit her service knowing full well that this will never be permitted.

Columbine. If you were to give me three times my present wages, I would not remain another quarter of an hour in your service. You may think that I am ruled by money. I love my reputation, mademoiselle, and that is all that matters.

Isabella. I do not think, Columbine, that your reputation has run any risks with me.

Columbine. All that is very well, but I am going to leave you.

Isabella. How! without telling me the reason?

Columbine. I leave you because my heart is in the right place, and I am dying of shame to see how little progress you have made in six months. From morning to night I wear myself out body and soul to teach you that beauty unadorned makes no dupes, and that a marriageable girl must adapt herself to all sorts of rôles if she is to succeed. Instead of profiting by my lessons you remain tranquilly confident of your charms and you leave the care of your fortune to your star. A fine way that to go about getting a husband!

Isabella. You are wrong to scold me, Columbine. Since you have been with me I have been no more than the echo of your remonstrances, and in company I never speak save on the lines which you have indicated to me.

Columbine. You go about it in a fine way! Virtue of my life! When marriage is the aim, more artifice is necessary. I have told you a hundred times to assume a severe and haughty air with those who seek you in marriage. Man is an animal that desires to be mastered. He attaches himself only to those who repulse him. From the moment that you seem gentle and complaisant any fatuous suitor may suppose your heart to be garrotted by his charms. But when you treat him with indifference, you will see him supple, arduous, attentive, sparing no pains or expense to succeed in pleasing you.

Isabella. It seems, then, that I am still a novice, for I had thought that sincerity sustained by honesty must most surely win affection.

Columbine. Whence are you with your honesty? Go on singing that tune and you'll die an old maid. Get it into your head, mademoiselle, that with the man of to-day it is necessary to be astute, alert, and roguish even, if necessary. The great thing is be become a wife; the rest is in the hands of God.

In *L'Homme à Bonnes Fortunes*, Columbine is the younger sister of Isabella. She is but fifteen years of age, and desires already to be married.

Columbine dressed as a little girl, and Isabella

Isabella. You are really very foolish to stuff your head with silly notions of love and marriage. Is such conduct becoming in a younger sister? Were it not better that you should renounce the world?

Columbine. All that is very easy to say, my sister, but you wouldn't speak as you speak if you felt as I feel.

Isabella. And what do you feel, pray? And what do I feel who am your elder? Do you hear me complaining of the tiresomeness of the spinster state? You're an amusing urchin!

Columbine. An amusing urchin? I am not as much an urchin as I seem: and I should have become a wife long since if my father had permitted it, for I have been told that one may be married at the age of twelve.

Isabella. But do you so much as know what a husband is, that you talk like this?

Columbine. Should I want one if I didn't know?

Isabella. Hey! And where have you learned all these fine things?

Columbine. One doesn't need to learn them. Marriage must be a very agreeable state, since the mere thought of it brings so much pleasure.

Isabella. You are very much out in your reckoning if you think marriage is agreeable. A fine thing to have a husband who is always grumbling! A fine thing to have the care of servants! A fine thing to suffer the inconvenience of pregnancy! That alone were sufficient to make me renounce marriage for ever. You are not fit for marriage. It is not a child's game.

Columbine. And I tell you that I am as fit for marriage as you are. And although I may be wrong, if I were married at once I am sure I should not die of it.

Isabella. Really! I think I am very patient to listen to all these expressions of your petty humour! There is no one so bereft of sense as to desire to take charge of you.

Columbine. Eh! la, la, it is not such a heavy charge, and everybody is not afraid of it. Less than a week ago, in a shop at the Palais, a gentleman of condition told me how much he liked me, and how glad he would be to marry me.

Isabella. And what did you answer him?

Columbine. I told him that I was still very young for that, but that next year——

Isabella. You will be older and more foolish. Can't you see that he was mocking you, and that you are becoming ridiculous? You ought to die of shame.

Pierrot (*entering*). How now, mesdemoiselles! What a noise you are making. You seem to be flattering one another after the fashion of cat and dog.

Columbine. Pierrot, it is my sister who is angry. She would have no husbands but for herself.

Pierrot. The glutton!

Columbine. My poor Pierrot. You who are so beautiful, tell me: is it necessary that I should be a spinster all my life?

Pierrot. Impossible! Look now, girls should be married when they are young; youth is game that won't keep.

Isabella. But then, is it just that I should resign my rights to a younger sister?

Pierrot (*to Columbine*). It is true that so far you are but an embryo, and I have seen larger ones in bottles.

Columbine. I admit, Pierrot, that I am still small, but——

ISABELLA. Silence! There is no enduring your impertinences. I will leave you.

After the exit of Isabella, Columbine entrusts Pierrot with the delivery of a letter to the gentleman whom she met at the Palais. "Since I know how to write," she says, "why should I not write?"

"Quite so," replies Pierrot, and he departs with the love-letter, exclaiming: "A fine thing nature! It thinks of marriage whilst in the shell!"

Some scenes later Pierrot brings the reply from this gentleman of condition whom Columbine already loves, and who is none other than Harlequin.

COLUMBINE. Well, my poor Pierrot, did you bear my letter to this viscount?

PIERROT. I did, and he sends you a little note in return.

COLUMBINE (*snatching the letter from him*). Give it me quickly.

PIERROT. Peste! How sharp-set you are upon the quarry.

COLUMBINE (*reading*). "Love is like an itch; there is no concealing it. Wherefore may the plague catch me if I do not come and see you to-day.—VISCOUNT OF BERGAMOTTE."

PIERROT. Now there is a man who writes tenderly.

COLUMBINE. He loves me, for he says so, and I hope that we shall soon be married.

It is always Harlequin who is, will be, or has been the lover or the husband of Columbine. But Harlequin is not set upon being faithful. He courts other women, and goes even so far as to introduce one into the conjugal domicile, pretending himself a bachelor. But his duplicity is discovered, and Columbine comes to an understanding with Angélique, her rival, and they both avenge themselves by cudgelling the too-perfidious Harlequin.

Sometimes Harlequin has abandoned her in Venice, to go to seek his fortune in Paris under the dress and style of the

Marquis Sbruffadelli. Columbine pursues him with her vengeance, and assumes all manner of disguises to frighten him, for she has given out that she is dead, thereby causing great joy to Harlequin, who is in haste to marry Isabella.

Columbine unites herself with Pasquariello, and they vie with each other as to which shall play the more tricks upon the ungrateful Harlequin. First she comes as a Spaniard, addressing Harlequin in Castilian; he does not understand a word of it, and interprets what she says in his own fashion. After putting him in a rage, she discloses herself, crying: "*Perfido traditore, m'avrai negli occhi, se non m'hai nel cuore!*" (Perfidious traitor, you shall have me in your sight if not in your heart). Harlequin, terrified, cries for help. She runs away to return as a soubrette and enter the service of her rival, Isabella. There Harlequin attempts to flirt with her, and implores her to come and mend and starch the only three shirts that he possesses. Columbine, pretending not to know him, speaks to him of Harlequin, alluding to him as a wretch, a villain, who caused the death of a certain heart-broken Columbine.

"In truth," says Harlequin, "there are great villains in the world! But is she really dead?"

"Alas, it is but too true," she replies. Whereupon Harlequin makes philosophy upon love and death.

Columbine interrupts him by revealing herself: "*Perfido traditore, m'avrai negli occhi, se non m'hai nel cuore!*" This threat comes up again and again; it is the drop of water which, falling incessantly upon the rock, ends by piercing it. She reappears as a girl from Gascony and speaks its dialect; again as a Moorish girl, in which character she dances and pulls the beard of Harlequin. She turns up as a master of arms, as a picture, as a doctor; as a woman she lodges a complaint against Harlequin, and returns as a lawyer to plead against him. Finally Harlequin, worn out by this unceasing persecution, marries her.

Caterina Biancolelli played in Paris until the closure of the Comédie-Italienne in 1697, whereupon she withdrew entirely from the theatre.

It was on the stage of the Comédie-Italienne that Columbine assumed for the first time the costume of Arlequine in *Le Rétour de la Foire de Besons,* in 1695. Afterwards this costume became a favourite one in the fairs. The popularised character of Columbine was traditionally dressed as Arlequine on the trestles in the farces, and very often in pantomime. It was the same in the case of Pierrette, who became the familiar companion of Pierrot, dressed in white with powdered face.

The costume of Columbine is very varied: now a soubrette, now a cavalier, now a little girl, now a lawyer, now a doctor, now the wife of Harlequin, whose mask and costume she wears. In the plays of Gherardi she wears the high comb of the period and a costume which would leave her undistinguishable from the leading lady but for the little apron, traditional in the theatre, and characteristic of the soubrette.

In more modern pantomime Columbine is usually the daughter, niece or ward of Cassandre. Her love affairs with Harlequin are nearly always crossed by the paternal will, which favours Léandre, the rich and powerful Léandre, the beautiful Léandre, so called in derision. But she has also, nearly always, a good fairy, or magic godmother, who saves her, and notwithstanding Cassandre, Pierrot and Léandre, she marries the Harlequin of her dreams.

V

In 1716, Margherita Rusca went to Paris as a member of the Regent's Italian Company. Wife of the famous Harlequin Antonio Vicentini (*Thomassin*) she played the parts of waiting-maids under the name of VIOLETTE. She was born at Bologna in 1691, and died on the 28th February 1731, in Paris.

Violette's character is practically the same as that of Columbine. Like Columbine she is Harlequin's mistress, but in point of malice she returns him as good as he gives.

VIOLETTE. Good morning, my dear Harlequin. What sort of a night have you had ?

HARLEQUIN. I do not know, for I was asleep, and therefore can tell you nothing about it. And you ?

VIOLETTE. Oh, as for me, I don't know whether I slept, for I did but dream all night, and when you dream you don't know what you are doing.

HARLEQUIN. And you dreamed of me, no doubt ?

VIOLETTE. No, I dreamed of that great baker lad who was your rival in Rome.

HARLEQUIN. Traitress ! And what did you dream touching this baker boy ?

VIOLETTE. I dreamed that I received a letter from him in Lyons, in which he promised to come instantly to Paris.

HARLEQUIN. Fie ! I don't like it at all. Such dreams are *cornuti*.

In the eighteenth century we find the soubrettes taking the names of Zerbinette, Olivette, Tontine, Mariotte, Genevotte, Babet, Farinette, Perette, Finebrette, Fiametta, Giannina, Catte, Ghitta, Checchina, Smeraldina, etc. Amongst the principal actresses performing these parts in the Italian comedy in Paris was Hippolyte de la Tude, known by the name of Clairon, who made her début at the Théâtre-Italien on the 8th January 1736, in the soubrette rôle in *L'Isle des Esclaves*. Of the début she speaks herself in the following terms :—

> " . . . I was taken to the house of my benefactress, where Deshayes, an actor of the Comédie-Italienne, gave me a hearing. He was so pleased with me that he presented me to all his associates. I was admitted to this theatre, and I was given a part to study. Permission for my début was obtained, and finally I made my appearance on the stage before I had reached the age of twelve.
>
> "The applause which I received reconciled my mother to the career which I had chosen. I was given preceptors in writing, dancing, music and the Italian language ; my industry, my ardour and my memory amazed my teachers. I devoured everything ; I retained everything. But my excessive youth, my short stature, the lack of protection, and the fear entertained by the famous Thomassin lest my talent should be hurtful to his daughters, who were not yet established, compelled me at the end of a year to seek my fortune elsewhere. I was engaged in the company of Rouen to perform all the parts suitable to my years, and to sing and dance. I was intent upon playing comedy and nothing else mattered to me."

vi

On the 6th May 1744, Anna Veronese, having adopted the stage name of Coraline, made her first appearance as a soubrette. She was born in Venice, and was a daughter of

Carlo Veronese (*Pantaloon*). "Both made their début in the same piece, *Le Double Mariage d'Arlequin*. The father was about forty-two years of age, and the daughter hardly fourteen; they gave the greatest possible satisfaction, and both were equally well applauded." The talents, like the beauty of Coraline, increased from day to day, and she was long without a rival in the theatre.

Her gifts inspired Marmontel, whilst Jean-Jacques Rousseau has the following to say of her in his *Confessions* (1743-1744):—

"None would suspect that it is to me that lovers of the theatre in Paris owe Coraline and her sister Camille. Yet, nothing could be more true. Veronese, their father, was engaged, together with his children, for the Italian troupe; and, after having received two thousand francs for the journey, instead of setting out, he remained coolly in Venice, at the theatre of San Luca (or possibly it may have been San Samuele, for proper names elude me). Thither Coraline, no more than a child at the time, was drawing a large number of people. M. le duc de Gesvres, as first gentleman of the chamber, wrote to the ambassador, claiming the persons of father and daughter. M. de Montaigu, in giving me the letter, gave me no instructions beyond saying, 'Look at that.'

"I repaired to M. le Blond to beg him to speak to the patrician who owned the theatre of San Luca, and whose name, I think, was Zustiniani, to the end that he might dismiss Veronese, who was engaged for the service of the King of France. Le Blond performed the commission indifferently,

Zustiniani temporised and Veronese was not dismissed. This made me angry. The season was that of carnival. I put on a mask and had myself borne to Zustiniani's palace. All those who observed the entrance of my gondola and the ambassador's livery were astonished. Venice had never seen the like. I enter, I am announced under the name of a masked gentleman (*una siora maschera*). The moment I was introduced, I removed my mask, and named myself. The senator turned pale in his stupefaction. 'Sir,' I said to him in Venetian, 'it is with regret that I importune Your Excellency with my visit, but you have in your theatre of San Luca a man named Veronese, who has been engaged for the service of the king, and whom you have vainly been requested to surrender. I come to claim him in the name of his Majesty.'

"My short speech took effect. No sooner had I departed than Zustiniani ran to give an account of his adventures to the inquisitors of State, who gave him a wigging. Veronese was dismissed that very day. I sent word to him that if he did not set out within a week I would have him arrested. He set out."

In 1749 Collé, in that satirical and unjust journal of his which, published after his death, came somewhat to modify men's opinion of him, wrote on the subject of the first performance of the *Rétour de la Paix*, of Boissy, at the Théâtre-Italien :

". . . It must also be agreed that the actors and actresses, not excluding Coraline and Camille, are very, very mediocre at their best, and thence descend to the detestable. Yet this theatre is well frequented notwithstanding that its comedians are fatuous, ridiculous and bad, and that they never know a word of their parts; Harlequin is cold, Scapin has but one scene and some grimaces; the women inspire horror with the exception of Coraline, who has the graces of youth and of beauty and some spirit, but who, notwithstanding that, is of no intelligence, and has the bad habit of giggling when she is on the stage. Sylvia is old, and Deshayes extremely mediocre. None the less theirs is to-day the best frequented spectacle. What can one say to it? Although the French comedians have fallen low, and are impossible in tragedy, they are at least endurable in comedy by comparison with the Italians; and to say this is to say much, for they are worth very little."

Nothwithstanding the judgment of Collé, the vogue of Coraline was enormous, and we are compelled to think that she had more than youth and beauty, since a whole series of plays was written specially for her. A great number of pieces appeared one after the other, bearing such titles as: *Coraline Magicienne, Coraline Jardinière, Coraline Protectrice de l'Innocence, Coraline Fée, Coraline Intrigante, Coraline Esprit Follet, Les Folies de Coraline, Arlequin-Coraline, L'Heureux Désespoir d'Arlequin et de Coraline*, etc.

Anna Veronese left France probably in 1750, for, under the name of Coralina, she was playing in the comedies of Carlo Goldoni at Venice in the years 1751 and 1752. Camille, who had been for several years playing the same parts, quitted the company and entered that of Sacchi, in which she shone until 1769 in the improvised fairy spectacles of Carlo Gozzi.

It will be seen that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the type of soubrette, daring in her language and in her actions, is to be confused and identified with that of the waiting-woman of Molière and his successors. This type retains to-day in Italy nothing peculiarly its own.

vii

The frank speech and the free ways of the woman of the people were personified in Naples in the character of La Guaiassa, a type speaking and acting like the matronly women of that class and country. She was compounded of triviality and a certain natural wit which reminds us of the chatterings of the ancient Citeria of the Latin farces. But the chief characteristic of La Guaiassa was a real and great goodness of heart under a gross exterior; ignoring everything that is beyond the narrow horizon of her alley (*vicolo*), and never having journeyed beyond the neighbouring street, hers was the good sense of honesty. This rôle was played in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century by a celebrated woman, who captured the hearts of the Neapolitan public fully as much as did Pulcinella. She expressed herself admirably in the dialect of the Neapolitan streets. Though handsome, her countenance lent itself marvellously well to her rôle. She was a Roman, and off the stage spoke the purest Italian. The news of her death in the fifties carried with it a sense of loss to the entire kingdom of Naples.

The unlimited licence allowed to the Italian soubrette and to La Guaiassa was never fully admitted in the French theatre; not even in the days when the public taste itself was least refined and its ears least prudish. Molière and Gherardi are contemporaries, but it is easily seen how much the Columbine of the latter exceeds in crudity the Dorine of the former. It is not only to the superiority of the talent of Molière that we must attribute his inferior audacity; the same public which, in the same theatre, on alternate days attended the performances of the Italians and the French, would never have tolerated in the French Company the same freedom of speech which they permitted to the Italians.

This is the more remarkable because, by a singular but verified anomaly, the morals of the Italian actresses, singers and dancers have always been superior to those of the French, and their domestic conduct better. The Marquis d'Argens, in his very philosophical—as the word was understood in his day—letters, gives the following certificate of good conduct to the Italian actresses:—

> "There is a greater difference between the characters of the Italian and French comédiennes than there is between our opera and theirs. Education, prejudice, custom and remuneration are the four things which produce the difference existing between the morals and the habits of life of the two. It has been one of our affectations to cast ignominy and infamy upon those who by their talents render our country illustrious. The Italians are very far from having any such ridiculous prejudices. True lovers of art, they are careful not to wither those who produce it. Senesini, Scalsi and Farfalini are beloved and cherished in Rome; not only are they not considered unworthy of burial, but, when one is compelled to render them the last honours, to the sorrow of

losing them will be united all that will go to proclaim how much they were esteemed.

"It is by these distinctions and these rewards that the Italian comédiennes are inspired with sentiments unknown to our own; they share in the honours of civil society; they are encouraged by the respect in which their talent is held, and, since their profession includes nothing that is not brilliant, they are careful not to render themselves contemptible by debauchery.

"Our French comédiennes, on the contrary, seem to wish to profit by the idea which we have of them; they avail themselves of the advantage of being regarded as libertines and, since their art exposes them to contempt, they cease to be restrained by sentiments which would be useless.

"It would be ridiculous to demand that Italian actresses should conduct themselves better than other women; it is more than sufficient that, being more exposed than ordinary women, they should, nevertheless, be as virtuous. If after reading my letter you do not agree with me, examine the French and Italian troupes in Paris, and you will perceive living arguments to support me."

V

PIERROT

THERE was in the sixteenth century, in Bologna, a sort of improviser, or popular poet, named Giulio-Cesare Croce who sang in the public places to the accompaniment of stringed instruments, which caused him to be given the surname of *Della Lira*. The burden of his songs was a lament on the life and adventures of a fictitious personage named Bertoldo. Perceiving that the crowd listened attentively and took pleasure in his burlesque epic, he conceived the notion to print his songs in prose and to offer them for sale. The public snatched at these books with enthusiasm, a circumstance which led to his increasing the *Life of Bertoldo* and adding that of his son *Bertoldino*, which latter enjoyed no less success than the former.

Croce was born in 1550 in the Bolognese village of Persiceto. At the age of seven he lost his father, and went to live with an uncle, a farrier at Castel-Franco. After having been admitted as a master of his trade of blacksmith, he settled in Bologna, was twice married, and became the father of fourteen children. It was there that the spirit of improvisation seized him and brought him his great reputation. The *Cavalieri* of Bologna paid him a pension in his old age, and he died in 1609.

Some years after the death of Croce *Della Lira*, Camillo Scaligero *Della Frata* composed a third volume, containing the *Life of Cacasenno,* the son of Bertoldino. This series enjoyed such a success in Italy that it ran into a large number of editions, and at the end of the seventeenth century the Bolognese painter, J. M. Crespi, illustrated various passages of these popular ballads; these were engraved by Lodovico Mattioli, and, instead of issuing a new edition of the romance in prose, several wits shared among themselves the labour of composing a poem in twenty cantos. Twenty-six authors, all of them Bolognese, Ferrarese or Lombards, co-operated in this task. The result was a superb volume *in quarto*, adorned with pictures and accompanied by notes, arguments and allegories, with Tuscan and Bolognese texts and a Bolognese vocabulary. This work appeared first in 1736 and then in 1740, published by Lelio della Volpe, "At the Sign of the Fox." A third edition appeared in 1747 in Venice, printed in Bolognese and in Venetian. Such was the vogue of this little poem that it was translated into modern Greek and enjoyed the greatest success in Greece and in Turkey. The fame of this buffoon creation has not yet ceased; to this day in Italy all who can read have read *La Vita di Bertoldo,* and nurses relate it to their nurslings. Bertoldo is better known in Italy than Bluebeard or Tom Thumb elsewhere. In general the principal features, sallies, retorts, witticisms or episodes of *La Vita di Bertoldo* are so celebrated that they have become proverbial, like "the peace of Marcolfa."

Marcolfa was Bertoldo's wife, a good woman, who, after quarrelling during the day with her husband, made the peace with him in the evening, and she found this peace-making so pleasant that, so as to provide occasion for it, she would frequently set up little disputes.

Croce *Della Lira's* little poem begins as follows :—

" In the tenth century of our era, King Alboin reigned over Lombardy and resided in Verona. This prince, who had conquered all Italy, was none the less very good, very gentle and very just.

" At the same time there lived in a little Veronese village a peasant named Bertoldo, whose countenance was ridiculous, whose head was as big as a pumpkin, whose hair was flat and red, whose ears were enormous and whose little eyes were red-rimmed ; his nose was thick and flat, and red as a beetroot ; his wide mouth was a slit from ear to ear ; he displayed two teeth like the tusks of a boar, and his beard was coarse and dirty. His figure was no better than his face ; his hands were large, his legs massive and crooked and his skin rough. But his wit was sharp and subtle, his judgment sound, and he was the pleasantest fellow in the village of Bertagnana, in which he lived. His fellow-citizens preferred his moralisings and his discourses to those of their priest. He adjusted their differences more satisfactorily than their lords and judges ; and, lastly, he made them laugh more than the charlatans and buffoons who sometimes passed through the village.

" He was the youngest of ten brothers and had barely enough for his own subsistence, that of his wife, Marcolfa, and a child named Bertoldino.

" One day Bertoldo was taken with a fancy to see the city and the court, this from mere curiosity, without any particular intention.

" Arrived in the market-place in Verona, he was in the act of looking at the king's palace, which he took for a great church, when he perceived two women who were fighting for a mirror. An officer of the guards came to inform them that the king desired to know the subject of their difference. Thus Bertoldo learned that Alboin was a good prince, who lent an ear to everybody. He saw that the gates of the palace stood open and that the guards hindered none from entering. He went in and penetrated to the audience chamber where the king was enthroned. There were some other seats, placed below and destined for the greater of his lords, who, nevertheless, remained respectfully standing. Bertoldo sat down without ceremony. Some courtiers, observing the impertinence of the peasant, and his grotesque countenance, admonished him that it was indecent to sit in the presence of the king.

"'Why so?' demanded Bertoldo. 'I sit down in church in the presence of God!'

"'But do you not know that the king is a personage elevated above all others?'

"'Per Bacco, he is not as high as the cock on our village steeple, which even tells us what the weather is going to do.'

"These words are reported to the king, who then questions Bertoldo:

"'Who are you?' he demands.

"'A man.'

"'When did you come into the world?'

"'When it pleased the good God to send me, and my parents to bring me into it, for it is a matter with which I was not concerned.'

"'What is your country?'

"'The world.'

"These replies stimulated the good king's curiosity. 'What,' he asked, 'is the fleetest thing in all the world?'

"'Thought.'

"'Which is the best wine?'

"'That which is drunk in your neighbour's house, for it costs nothing.'

"The king's fool was named Fagotto. He became extremely jealous of the friendship which the king began to show Bertoldo and of the credit which the latter began to enjoy at court. He had the audacity to pit himself against him, thinking to surpass him in wit.

"'How,' quoth the fool, 'would you set about carrying water in a sieve?'

"'I should wait until it was frozen.'

"'How would you catch a hare without running?'

"'I should wait until it was on the spit.'

"Fagotto set him no riddle which he could not answer on the spot. In the heat of the dispute Bertoldo desired to spit. He begged permission of the king.

"'I grant it willingly,' said the king, 'but choose a place in my palace where there will be nothing to spoil.'

"Bertoldo, after having sought awhile, spat upon Fagotto.

"Alboin the Debonnaire conceived a friendship for Bertoldo, perhaps because the latter did not conceal the truth from him, and set about inducing him by facts to contradict the things he had said the day before.

"Bertoldo, to afford the king a proof of the inconsequence, the indiscretion and the inquisitiveness of the fair sex whispered in the ear of a woman of the town that the king had pronounced a decree according seven wives to every husband. The revolted sex came in a crowd, shouting, screaming and insulting the King Alboin, to demand the revocation of his absurd decree. The king had a great deal of trouble to make himself heard, but he contrived it in the end, and informed them that they had been misinformed. On another occasion the ladies of the court claimed the exercise of political rights. Bertoldo gave them a box inclosing a bird, with the prohibition to open it within the following twenty-four hours. Two hours later the bird had taken flight. Thus Alboin proved to them that their inquisitiveness and their disobedience excluded them from affairs of state. But the Lombard monarch had a proud and haughty wife, who determined to avenge herself upon Bertoldo.

"Bertoldo was summoned to the presence of the queen and, after insults and blows administered by the ladies of the court, he was thrust into a great sack, which was tied at the neck, and in which he was left, the intention being to throw him into the river that night. A guard was set to watch him. The unfortunate Bertoldo ransacked his mind for a way out of the worst pass in which he had ever found himself.

"He persuaded the guard that he was thus imprisoned for very singular reasons, and that he would explain them if the fellow would untie the sack, and permit him to whisper in his ear the truth of the matter. The guard believed him and permitted him to put his head out of the sack. Bertoldo then told him that he was a great nobleman, that it was desired to compel him to marry a lady who was rich and beautiful, but of suspected chastity; that he preferred to drown sooner than make such a marriage, and that he had been imprisoned by way of compulsion; that in the evening they would come again to seek to drive him into this marriage, but that he would prefer to drown. The guard answered him that he was a fool, and offered to take his place and marry the damsel. Bertoldo got out of the sack, tied up the guard in it and departed from the palace."

This farce of the sack has since been transported into many Italian scenarii and French farces, and Molière, in *Les Fourberies de Scapin* has written round it a whole scene in the Italian manner.

"Bertoldo was recaptured and taken back to the palace. The queen obtained her complacent monarch's consent that her enemy should be hanged, and the king announced this to his dear Bertoldo, excusing himself by the fact that he was compelled to the step so as to be agreeable to his wife.

"'Sir,' said Bertoldo, 'I understand your reasons. It is necessary that the little should suffer for the caprices of the great. But, since I am to hang, I ask a favour: It is that I myself shall have the choice of the tree; for after all if a man is hanged to his own taste he is in part consoled.' The king consented.

"Bertoldo found fault with every tree proposed to him, and discovered none that suited him. This one was too high, that one too low. The branches of this one were too weak, the branches of that one too strong. The leaves of a cypress were of too sombre a green, and those of a lime too bright.

Bertoldo promenaded thus his escort, which consisted of an officer, two soldiers and the hangman, for several days, and visited every wood in the country. They tramped all day and stopped only to dine and sup in the villages. Bertoldo kept his guards in good humour, telling them fine stories of old times, the merriest tales in the world, and thus causing them to forget the object of their commission. When, in the end, they bethought them of it, they could not reconcile with their consciences the hanging of so merry a fellow. They advised him to return home, and themselves went back to the city.

"The queen, persuaded that her orders had been carried out, repented of having enforced the death of the unfortunate Bertoldo, and testified her repentance to the king. The king, who knew that the sly peasant was not dead, arranged things in such a fashion that the queen was the first to demand his recall. The monarch sent to fetch Bertoldo. He was slow to decide to return to court, insisting that soup and friendship are never worth anything when warmed up, and that an ounce of liberty is better than a hundredweight of gold. He received, however, so many proofs of friendship on the part of the king and queen that he went; but he bargained: firstly that his wife Marcolfa and his son Bertoldino should remain in the village, and continue to cultivate the little corner of land which they owned in Bertagnana; secondly that he should always retain his peasant garb, consenting, however, to wear garments without patches and stockings without holes; thirdly that he should be permitted always to eat his bread and onion, and his cheese soup.

"But Bertoldo did not long enjoy the royal favour. Compelled to go to bed later than was his custom, because often the king retained him until after sunset; compelled instead of delving the earth to charge himself with serious affairs, to reason upon them and to talk himself hoarse (because he could not write) his health broke down. The doctors compelled him to take medicine, a thing he had never done in his life, and so he died.

"King Alboin, in memory of the services which Bertoldo had rendered him, brought Marcolfa and Bertoldino to court. He had them properly dressed and presented them with a little farm at the gates of Verona, adding to the gift a coffer filled with gold pieces.

"Near the farm there was a pond in which the frogs made a noise such as Bertoldino had never heard in Bertagnana. He conceived a desire to silence them, and looked round for something to throw at them so as to scare or kill them. He came upon the coffer, took the gold pieces, and flung them into the pond at the aggravating beasts. Some few were killed, but the others croaked more loudly than ever. Thus he flung away all the gold that had been given to him. Marcolfa, perceiving what was done, reproached him bitterly, saying, amongst other things, that if men were to be silenced with money, such was not the case with frogs.

"Bertoldino, reasoning from this that animals preferred to be fed rather than paid, took all the provisions of the house and flung them into the pond. Fresh remonstrances from Marcolfa: 'Since we have no more flour we shall be forced to eat the chickens, and we have but few hens, and they can only hatch a few eggs at a time.'

"'Leave it to me,' said Bertoldino. 'I am bigger than a hen, I shall be able to hatch more.' And driving away all the hens from their eggs, he gathered the lot into a heap, sat upon it, and reduced it to a horrible omelette.

"Although admonished and sermonised by the king, who perceived that the son was as stupid as the father had been shrewd, Bertoldino continued to commit folly upon folly. He whipped himself with nettles to drive away the flies. Wishing to hinder a hawk from taking little birds from a nest he tied them all together; as a consequence the bird of prey, which had been taking but one every now and then, carried off the lot at once. Having seen at court some little pug dogs whose ears had been clipped to improve their appearance, he cut the ears of his donkey, and paraded it with ostentation, that it might be admired. This last deed was the cause of his being sent back to his village. Marcolfa followed him thither, and they lived there very happily. Bertoldino married a peasant girl named Menghina, who bore him Cacasenno, the third hero of this history. Alboin the Debonnaire, curious to know whether the grandfather's wit might not have skipped a generation, summoned Cacasenno to court with the good Marcolfa. But the grandson was no greater success than his father. He was lazy and greedy, and all that is related of him turns upon these two faults. His last feat, and that which brings the epic to a close, was his eating a plate of glue which he mistook for broth. He died of it, or was reduced to the point of death."

There is nothing surprising in the success scored by this peasant Bertoldo, who, solely by his wit and his naïve simple sense, makes his fortune at the court of a great king, soars above all the ridicule which it is sought to heap upon him, issues cleverly and wittily from all the traps that are set for him, and surmounts by his wit the short-comings of his education. Is it possible that Cervantes was acquainted with the doings of Bertoldo when he created that other type of naïve good sense, Sancho Pança?

Bertoldo was not long in being transferred from fiction into life. The types of Bertoldo, of his son Bertoldino, and even of his grandson Cacasenno, passed on to the trestles of Italy towards the end of the sixteenth century. In Florence, in Bologna and in Lombardy there was no troupe of actors without a *Bertoldo,* a sort of lackey, a famous utterer of truths; but *Bertoldino* appears to have had a much more enduring vogue in the theatre. This type, entirely doltish in the original, becomes, according to the actors by whom it was played, a mixture of rustic artlessness and shrewdness; he displays a sententiousness akin to Bertoldo's, whilst at the same time flinging his gold to the frogs to silence them. For the rest, the adventures of our two heroes have furnished a goodly number of scenes, and even of scenarii, in the three hundred years during which they have been reaping success under different names, such as Pirolino and Bigolo.

In the sixteenth century the Comédie-Italienne performed in Paris a comic opera entitled *Bertholde à la Ville*, drawn from an interlude entitled *Bertoldo in Corte*. This was sung by the Italian Company at the Opéra in 1753.

Nicolò Zeccha was playing these naïve rôles under the name of Bertoldino at the end of the sixteenth century. Nicolô Barbieri (Beltrame) says, in speaking of him, that he was a young man of great courage, very skilled in the use of weapons, and a fine dancer. He was skilled too in killing birds on the wing, and so fleet a runner that he had many times brought down stags by pursuing them. Victor Amédée I., Duke of Savoy, invited him often to take part in his hunts, and accorded to him, in addition to this honour, full permission to take such horses from his stables as he might desire, and to hunt when or where he should please in the ducal preserves, with the right to banish from them all those who enjoyed this privilege before him. Zeccha was still a member of the *Fedeli* troupe in 1630.

ii

Pagliaccio first made his appearance in the troupe of Juan Ganassa, and travelled through Italy, France and Spain in 1570.

The name of Pagliaccio (literally, cut straw), which has

become the synonym of madcap or giddy fellow, is no more than a corruption of Bajaccio (a bad jester): it is the pejorative of *baja* (mockery), signifying an utterer of railleries, good or bad.

In one of the Italian troupes that passed through Florence at the end of the sixteenth century, in 1598, there appeared a personage named Gian Farina, his countenance white like Pagliaccio's and dressed in very ample linen garments, but wearing in addition the *tabaro* and a wooden sword. We cannot ascertain the real name of this actor, who, under his sobriquet of Gian Farina, enjoyed a certain celebrity as a comedian and was the director of an itinerant troupe. Like Pagliaccio he was dressed in white, and his face—as his name implies—was whitened with flour. That it was also the custom of the French comedians thus to whiten their faces so as to give more character to their grimaces, we may gather from Montaigne:

> "These men of vile condition who seek to recommend themselves by dangerous leaps and other strange mountebank movements were compelled to whiten their faces and to indulge in savage grimaces to induce us to laugh."

The custom was anterior to Montaigne, for as early as 1502 we find Jean Serre, and his son Auguste Serre, parading under costumes analogous to those transmitted to us by Callot.

In point of costume, Pagliaccio is but a variant of Pulcinella; his pointed hat of white wool and his garment of white linen seem to be no more than the undress of the Neapolitan macaroni eater. His character, however, is quite different.

Salvator Rosa, who was deeply interested in the theatre and in its costumes, has left us the following description :—

"Pagliaccio is dressed in a coat that is extremely full and pleated, and fastened by enormous buttons ; his hat is soft and white and capable of assuming any shape ; he wears a mask, yet his face is covered with flour. He is stupid, giddy and awkward, and whilst for ever urging others to the most daring measures, he is himself the greatest poltroon on earth ; he affects agility, merely to tumble incessantly and drag down with him his old master, whom he has the air of endeavouring to support."

His flour-covered face and his white mask particularly distinguish him in point of external features from the Neapolitan Pulcinella. In point of character he differs to a still greater degree. Pagliaccio, the stupid lackey, is no more than a trestle jester, whose rôle consists in clumsily imitating, like the English clown, the gestures and movements of the other mimes, and in receiving constant beatings, to the great amusement of the audience.

In Italian pantomimes, Pagliaccio fills the place occupied by Pierrot in France ; he no longer wears a mask, his face being merely covered with flour. He is the rival of Harlequin, and the lackey of Pantaloon. He is in love with Columbine, but—like the French Pierrot—he is never successful in carrying her off from Florindo, the lover who is always dressed in the latest fashion of his time and place. In these pantomimes the rôles of father fall to the lot of the Doctor or old Tabarino.

In 1670 Zaniazi, half Gilles, half Pulcinella, performed rôles which greatly resembled those of the doltish Harlequins.

In 1770 Natocelli achieved renown in Italy as a good Bajaccio, whilst in Paris in 1803 Martini was performing his farces with Podesta, Vanini and other Italian buffoons in the ancient gardens of Tivoli.

The French Paillasse is of very much more recent date. It would be towards the end of the eighteenth century that this character made its appearance in the Nicolet Theatre (La Gaîté) in a sort of satire upon the debauched young nobility, a piece based upon the *Festin de Pierre*, and coarsely adapted to the tastes of the boulevard public. Paillasse took the place of Sganarelle.

Reduced to the utmost misery in consequence of the follies and excesses of his master, having nothing left in which to dress himself, Paillasse would assume the tattered covering of an old mattress and successfully array himself in it to perform his tricks of equilibrium and juggling. Hence the costume, with blue and white or red and white squares, which from that date has been favoured by itinerant jugglers and knife throwers.

Paillasse neither wears a mask nor powders his face with flour. His Indian camisole in squares is short, tight to the figure, with shoulder-of-mutton sleeves fastened at the wrists; his breeches are wide and full, but tight below the knee. He wears the white collar and the black skull-cap.

Brazier says, in his *Histoire des Petits Théâtres de Paris,* when speaking of the Boulevard du Temple:

"This famous boulevard was a Parisian kermesse, a perpetual fair, an all-the-year-round market. Here you would find matter for laughter and amusement by day and by night; it was the rendezvous of the best society; a crowd of brilliant equipages were constantly stationed there. Cold and heat were braved for the sake of listening to a Paillasse who, in spite of Deburau, was not without merit. This Paillasse, who was named Père Rousseau, had made himself a reputation by singing in the open air:

> " 'C'est dans la ville de Bordeaux
> Q'est z'arrivé trois gros vaisseaux,
> Les matelots qui sont dedans,
> Ce sont, ma foi ! de bons enfants.'

" I myself have beheld the remains of this good fat Paillasse, and I have bowed respectfully before him.

" I can affirm that never was there a Paillasse more complete or more amusing; it was not a case of the pale and livid countenance of Deburau; it was not his wise and grave performance nor his artistic poses, nor his expressive winks. Here instead was a full, red, plethoric countenance; it symbolised the gaiety of the populace at its fullest. It was impossible not to laugh like a king's fool at the sight of his grimaces, at the sound of his hoarse and broken voice; he achieved in song what Deburau achieved in pantomime, for this Paillasse of mine was also a great actor. Do not suppose that he recited like a pupil of the Conservatoire; he knew how to be witty and mordant in his declamation; his physiognomy was of an astounding mobility. . . . We would remain by the hour watching Père Rousseau, that classic Paillasse! We hardly dared to breathe, such was our fear of missing one of his gestures, one of his contortions! "

PIERROT

The farces performed by Rousseau in public at the close of the eighteenth century were very much what they are still to-day, a tissue of imbecilities and gross ineptitudes.

PAILLASSE. Sir, since you are so kind, I beg of you to do me a service.

CASSANDRE. What service?

PAILLASSE. To compose me a compliment for a lady with whom I am madly in love.

CASSANDRE. It is first necessary that I should know her qualities. Is she lovable, beautiful?

PAILLASSE. Oh, as for her beauty, there can be but one opinion. First of all, let me tell you that she has only one eye; but the one that remains is so engaging, so witty, so seductive, that it is without equal, and I really think that if it is alone it is because Nature was incapable of producing such another.

CASSANDRE. She has only one eye! Well, well, that at least is one charm.

PAILLASSE. Oh, and her mouth, sir! Oh! you cannot picture it. She can thrust a whole apple into it without the least trouble.

CASSANDRE. Another advantage; so that, when she wishes to tell herself a secret, she can whisper it in her own ear.

PAILLASSE. True, sir. And then her nose! It is a model nose, a curiosity; it has something of the pear, something of the mulberry, and something of the beetroot.

CASSANDRE. Ah, I see; it is a rarity.

PAILLASSE. Oh, and then her feet! They are so small that I assure you I can hardly get her shoes on over my own boots.

CASSANDRE. And her figure?

PAILLASSE. Her figure? She is built like a tower; she is quite round. I beg you, sir, to compose me this compliment, which I am burning to address her.

CASSANDRE. I consent; but first invite the present company to come inside and see the extraordinary spectacle which we are going to give this evening.

Paillasse (*brusquely*). Hey, there, you others! come inside!

Cassandre (*kicking him*). Animal! Is that the way to address polite society?

Paillasse. You are right. I made a mistake. Hi, there, you others! come inside!

(Cassandre *chases him off*.)

iii

At the end of the sixteenth century the French *enfariné* or the *barbouillé*, as he was then called, was Robert Guérin, named *Lafleur*, but better known as Gros-Guillaume. He was a comedian of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, then managed by Valeran, named the *Picard*, which was as much as to say, a jester and a wit.

Valeran's real name was Lecomte. "He was," says Tallemant, "a tall handsome man. He was the head of the troupe and very generous towards its members, and he himself took the money at the door."

Gros-Guillaume was more than a jester; he was a remarkable actor, greatly esteemed by Henry IV. and by Richelieu, and often commanded to the Louvre to amuse the Béarnais, who enjoyed performances which ridiculed the language and affectations of the gentlemen of his court, particularly those of the Marshal de Roquelaure, concerning whom Tallemant des Réaux relates the following anecdote:—

"One day the king held him between his knees whilst witnessing a command performance by Gros-Guillaume of the farce of the *Gentilhomme Gascon*. Every now and again, to amuse his master, the Marshal pretended to want to get away to thrash Gros-Guillaume, shouting, '*Cousis, ne bous fâchez.*' It happened that after the king's assassination, the comedians, not daring to perform in Paris in view of the general consternation there, repaired to the provinces and made their way to Bordeaux. There the Marshal was the king's lieutenant. It was necessary for the players to obtain his sanction. 'I give it you,' said he, 'on condition that you will play the farce of the *Gentilhomme Gascon.*' They imagined that a sound cudgelling awaited them, and sought to excuse themselves. They were, however, prevailed upon to perform. The Marshal went to see the farce; but the memories it evoked of the good master he had lost occasioned him so much pain that he departed in tears almost immediately after the beginning of the play."

Gros-Guillaume had been a baker. Fat beyond all measure, he wore two girdles, one above, the other below, his belly. Dressed in white, he discarded the usual mask of Pagliaccio, but covered his face with flour, which he would cause to fly all about him by blowing out his cheeks and by other grimaces. Turlupin, Gaultier-Garguille and he were the only real French buffoons. With Gaultier-Garguille and Gros-Guillaume, who died within a few months of each other, the French farce died also.

Gros-Guillaume wore a white linen blouse, pantaloons with wide brightly coloured stripes, and a red cap. ". . . This is my valet, Guillaume le Gros," says Gaultier-Garguille when speaking of him, "and he is to be known by his piebald costume in the fashion of the Swiss of Francis I., and by his belly, copied from a calabash."

IV

Pedrolino, Piero and Pierrot are all one and the same personage. Under the designation of Piero, a lackey, he was seen on the Italian stage as early as 1574 in a comedy of Cristoforo Castelletti; we find him filling the same character in *I Bernardi*, by Giovanmaria Cecchi, in 1563, and in the plays of Luigi Grotto, *La Altiera* amongst others, in 1587. Under the name of Pedrolino we find him playing rôles of naïve lackeys with Bertolin (Zeccha). In the *Gelosi* troupe, from 1578 to 1604 inclusive, the rôles of lackey are played by Pedrolino, Burattino and Arlecchino.

Pedrolino is a very complex type, presenting, in point of character, the greatest resemblance to the modern French Pierrot; his especial characteristic is his honesty. In the fifty scenarii of Flaminio Scala he is almost always the preferred lover of the soubrette Franceschina, who, none the less, receives the homage of Pantaloon without prejudice to that of Arlecchino and Burattino. Sometimes he is the husband of Franceschina, and then he plays the rôle of a Sganarelle; betrayed by his wife and discovering it, he rebukes her coquetry, but ends by recognising that the fault is his own, and begs her pardon, which he obtains only after a deal of trouble.

Lackey to the coquette Flaminia, he refuses to undertake the delivery of her love letters to her lover Orazio. Flaminia and Orazio abuse him and call him a rascal. He becomes furiously enraged, whereafter he weeps upon the bosom of Harlequin, bewailing the loss of his reputation.

As the lackey of Pantaloon, and trusted to keep watch over the wife of his master whilst the latter sleeps, Pedrolino also falls asleep, or else he drinks with Captain Spavento and the Doctor, and all three, "drunk as monkeys," commit the wildest extravagances and end by falling to the ground, "where they remain." On the morrow, Pantaloon, furious to learn that whilst he slept his wife has been abroad, reproaches Pedrolino, who is still somnolent and weary from yesterday's drunkenness. Pedrolino, remembering nothing, understands nothing of his master's complaints. Pantaloon, beside himself with anger, beats him and bites him, to wrest him from his torpor, and ends by leaving him in tears; but the first pangs of sorrow being over, Pedrolino swears vengeance. He contrives so cleverly that all the characters of the piece mystify Pantaloon, and persuade him that his breath is very unpleasant. Pantaloon ends by believing it, and submits to the extraction of four excellent teeth. After that he understands that he has been fooled, and that Pedrolino is the author of this practical joke. Pedrolino simulates madness to escape the blows which threaten him.

He is a poltroon and a boaster. Bent upon avenging the wrong done him by Harlequin, he arrives armed to the teeth, perceives his enemy and hurls himself upon him with drawn weapons. Harlequin, armed with a door-bar, receives him firmly. Then, face to face, they heap abuse each upon the other, whilst depending upon those present to hinder them from coming to blows. The Captain seeks to separate them, whereupon they strike out furiously, with the result that it is the Captain who receives this shower of blows.

Elsewhere, after having boasted that he fears nothing, Pedrolino perceives Harlequin covered by a white garment, lantern in hand; at sight of him he interrupts his conversation and flees as fast as his legs will carry him.

His sorrows do not affect his appetite. We behold him weeping and complaining after having received a beating. He meets Harlequin, who brings him on behalf of the Captain a plate of macaroni. Pedrolino accepts it and continues to weep uninterruptedly whilst eating like an ogre; Harlequin, deeply affected, weeps also and begins to eat with him. Burattino arrives and, beholding them eating and weeping, he too bursts into tears and puts his hand into the dish. Not one of them says a word. The macaroni, watered by their tears, is soon swallowed, whereafter Pedrolino, weeping, turns to Harlequin. "Kiss the Captain's hands for me," he says, and goes off. Burattino entrusts Harlequin with a like commission on his own behalf and makes his exit on the other side, also weeping. Harlequin, bursting into fresh sobs, goes off licking the plate.

Pedrolino is utterly the slave of fear. Whilst dining under a tree with Harlequin and the beautiful Dorinda, the repast is interrupted by a gigantic bear which advances upon them. Pedrolino leaps up; the bear does the same; and whilst Harlequin, to hold its attention, throws at it one by one all the apples of the dinner, which the bear very adroitly catches in its jaws, Pedrolino decamps; Harlequin follows him and the bear carries off Dorinda, who lends herself without protest to this abduction.

Arrayed in a long white shirt, wearing a straw hat and carrying a huge staff, Pedrolino is entrusted by his master with a love letter which he is to deliver to Isabella; but as a result of his habitual absent-mindedness he loses the letter; he perceives his loss and, in casting about him for some means of discharging his commission, he is inspired with the happy notion of committing a theft upon a letter-carrier. He purloins from the basket the first letter that comes to his hand and delivers it to Isabella, whence ensues an intrigue of extreme complication.

In another scenario, dressed as a beggar, with a patch over one eye, he meets the Captain and begs alms from him whilst regarding him fixedly with his uncovered eye. The Captain, wearied and rendered impatient by his steadfast glance, demands the reason of it.

"It is," replies Pedrolino, "that I am a physiognomist and that I perceive from your face that you will shortly be hanged."

The Captain, to rid himself of such disagreeable prognostications, gives him some money. Another person, for the sake of peace, gives him bread and wine. Pedrolino sits down in a corner to eat and drink, but, finding the bread not clean and the wine not good, he throws one and the other at the legs of him from whom he received them, and goes off to get drunk at the hostelry.

He is mischievous and he plays practical jokes upon everybody. He dons the clothes of Cassandre, his master, and impersonates him; he dresses up as a woman and induces the Captain to abduct him; he gives Harlequin or Burattino filth to drink; he dresses Pantaloon as a woman to lead him to a supposed rendezvous, assuring him that such is the caprice of the lady who awaits him, in her anxiety to save appearances; at the same time he relates some fable to the Doctor, to lure him to the same rendezvous at which he himself is present in hiding, After many amorous proposals between the two cozened old men they finally recognise each other and almost come to blows.

In some pieces he is an intriguer and a lackey in the service of young people. But even then his real nature is preserved and he conforms to his type by his mischievousness and his buffooneries, when, for instance, morion on head and sword at his side, he imitates the roaring furies of Captain Spavento.

Such is the rôle of Pedrolino in the collection of Flaminio Scala. It will be seen therefore that it is quite wrong to attribute to the type of Pierrot a modern and entirely French origin.

"Down to the middle of the seventeenth century," says M. Édouard Fournier in a recent article on the subject of Molière, "the Italian comedy had but one doltish character, Harlequin: it was always he who was the butt of practical jokes, it was always he who received the beatings. But with the advent of Domenico, all this was changed. As you know, he played Harlequin parts; but he played them like the man of wit that he was; well-read, and the friend of men of letters, he found it impossible, even under a mask, to accommodate himself to a character of imperturbable doltishness. Moreover he recognised, as has been wisely remarked by Léris in his Dramatic Dictionary, the humour of the French public, which insists upon wit in all performances. Therefore he infused wit into the rôle of Harlequin, and from then onward Harlequin was a completely metamorphosed character. Since Domenico justified himself by his success, none interfered with him. Thus Comedy gained a character; but on the other hand it also lost one, and one very much more indispensable than this charming intruder. How, without the necessary fool, was it possible to sustain Comedy's repertory? Obviously an imbecile was essential to the repertory, to the by-play of the characters and to the lesser pleasures of the public. A fortunate chance, the inspiration of Molière, gave him to the world one fine day in the person of Pierrot.

"It was under these circumstances that Pierrot arrived, it was thus, as has been well said by des Essarts, that this singular character made his appearance, 'French-born, in the Italian theatre.'"

It was Molière who, first, in his *Don Juan, ou le Festin de Pierre*, gave a peasant the name of Pierrot. He based this piece upon an Italian scenario entitled, *Il Convitato di Pietro* (Peter's Guest), which had already been performed in Paris in 1659 by the Sieur de Villiers, a comedian of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and elsewhere by others.

"Molière was tempted," says M. Édouard Fournier, "by the success of the Italian piece, to write his *Don Juan*. The success obtained by his comedy again in its turn tempted the Italians. He was inspired by them, they were inspired by him. In the early part of February, 1673, a bare fortnight before the death of that great author, the Italians performed in their theatre a new plot made up of the best scenes of their old piece, *Il Convitato di Pietro*, and, particularly, of the most amusing passages appropriated by them from the comedy of Molière. This comic medley, made up like the dress of Harlequin, was entitled *Aggiunta al Convitato di Pietro*.

"Among the characters transformed and adapted by the Italians in this extraordinary scenic hotch-potch was Pierrot, with his simpleton ways, his naïve love affairs and his unaltered name. Little attention was paid to this new-comer, so that, haphazard and, as it were, out of charity, the part was entrusted to a low-salaried member of the company named Giaratone. He did marvels. The others had the good sense not to be jealous and thus, in one stroke and by the one success, the character and the comedian alike acquired rights of citizenship.

"From this moment Pierrot never again left the Italian Comedy. In spite of his newness, in spite of his French name, he became as much a type as any of the others, as Mezzetin, Lelio, Cassandre, or even Harlequin himself, whose emancipation was justified by his advent, and who very willingly accepted him as the inheritor of his old-time stupidity and the victim of his malice of more recent date. Since there was nothing to show that he was a character of recent importation, so quickly and usefully was he employed in all the pieces as a type now acquired and naturalised for all time, Pierrot had his successes and his actors, who appropriated his flour-covered mask and the doltishness which became traditional.

"Amongst these was Hamoche, who did marvels somewhere about 1712, and for whom I am inclined to think was composed the air *Au Clair de la Lune*, always attributed, but without the least evidence, to Lulli.

"The costume of Pierrot was already that with which we are acquainted. Molière, in his *Don Juan*, had given him the white blouse of a French peasant, such as is still worn by Colin, the sleepy boy in the last scenes of *Georges Dandin*. Upon being turned into an Italian character Pierrot was compelled to change this garment; but he preserved at least the colour. The garb which he then took, and has never since abandoned, was borrowed from the Neapolitan Pulcinella. But in the case of Pulcinella the tunic is shorter, and fits the figure more closely, whilst the pantaloons are not so wide.[1] Finally Pierrot covered his face with flour."

Notwithstanding these ingenious assertions it is impossible to think that Giaratone should not have possessed the traditions of Pedrolino, since the character which he introduced into the Franco-Italian theatre accords in every particular with that Italian ancestor of his: we discover the same poltroonery, the same gluttony, the same naïveté, so often malicious, the same stupidity mingled with good sense, and the same fundamental honesty and candour. As for the costume, nothing is discoverable to inform us exactly of that which was worn by the Pedrolino of Flaminio Scala. It is stated in a scenario that Pedrolino is dressed in a long shirt and wears a straw hat. Was his face floured like Pagliaccio's and was he already dressed in white? That is very possible. Caprice has determined far less than is supposed in those costumes of classic fantasy which, however transformed, never absolutely abandon the lines of tradition. Giaratone, informed of the true character of the old Pedrolino, would no doubt be equally informed on the score of his make-up, and his dress; as for his Gallicised appellation, it is beyond doubt the same name, for in the scenarii of Gherardi the characters address him indifferently as Pierrot or Piero.

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[1] "The white uniform of the gardes-françaises," says M. Édouard Fournier, "is somewhat reminiscent of the costume of the naïve comedian; hence they are everywhere called Pierrots. The street urchin did not stop at that: whenever he beheld a soldier in white uniform he imitated the cry of the sparrow, which is also called a pierrot, and cried out 'Piou-piou'; hence this sobriquet, which is still given to our infantry soldiers."

It would therefore seem that Giaratone did no more than rejuvenate and adapt to the Franco-Italian theatre the character of the old Pedrolino, taking for his performances those shades of character dominant in the greater number of the scenarii of Scala and abandoning the intriguing qualities sometimes, but exceptionally, attributed to him. He approached the type of Bertoldino, a type which, long before his day, had been confounded with that of Pedrolino. He floured his face after the fashion of the old French *badins*, who themselves—like Pagliaccio with his white mask and his flour, Pulcinella and Harlequin with their black masks, Pantaloon and Brighella with their brown masks, Coviello and the Doctor, each with his mask of a distinctive colour—derive from the ancient mimes with their countenances blackened, browned, reddened or whitened, who are alleged to have been resurrected during the Renaissance, but who in all probability had never disappeared from the Italian boards.

Just as Pedrolino had been the incarnation of the Italian peasant, so Pierrot was that of the French peasant, and he became with the French public the most popular type after Polichinelle.

In the scenarii and theatrical pieces of Gherardi, Pierrot is always a servant of the Doctor, of Brocantin or of Cinthio, just as in French pieces and pantomimes he is always the servant of Cassandre. He is a fellow who always says what he thinks and who recognises no social distinctions. This privilege of speaking his mind, accorded to the finesse and astuteness of the soubrette, is similarly granted to the simplicity and awkwardness of Pierrot. He never fails to lecture his master.

Pierrot. Sir, sir, I come to tell you once for all that I am very pleased with you and that I have always loved you better than you deserve.

Cassandre. I am much obliged to you for the honour.

Pierrot. Put on your hat [*i.e.* don't stand on ceremony]. You have paid me my wages promptly and I have consumed them in your service in like fashion.

Cassandre. That is not my fault. But, Pierrot, what ails you? I find you entirely changed.

Pierrot. That is not your affair. I shall be changed if I wish and I shall not be changed if I do not wish.

Cassandre. I beg you to pardon me for having presumed to take an interest in your concerns.

Pierrot. What I want to know, sir, without all this preamble, is, what do you intend to give me by way of reward?

Cassandre. But you confess, yourself, that I have paid you all your wages.

Pierrot. Agreed. But have I not also told you that I have consumed them?

Cassandre. That is not my fault.

Pierrot. Oh, sir, let us reckon up the services out of the ordinary which I have rendered you, and you will see how stupid you are. Firstly, I have not told your wife that you have a love affair in the town upon which you are spending the best part of your income. I leave it to yourself to put a price upon my discreetness.

Cassandre. It is just. That deserves something.

Pierrot. Secondly, you have been ten times drunk without my permission. I am not compelled to put up with you in such disorders.

Cassandre. That is well reasoned.

Pierrot. Thirdly, I have fallen in love whilst in your service.

Cassandre. That certainly deserves a recompense.

Pierrot. As the total sum of the extraordinary expenditure to which I have been subjected in your service, pay me ten thousand livres, and I will give you a quittance in full.

Cassandre. Your accounts seem to be in order. But whilst awaiting a settlement, go as far as the post to see if there are any letters for me.

(Pierrot *goes and returns at the end of an hour. His master is busy when he enters.*)

Pierrot. Yes, sir.

Cassandre. What do you want?

Pierrot. I have come to tell you, sir, that I have seen them.

Cassandre. Seen what?

Pierrot. Your letters at the post.

Cassandre. Where are they?

Pierrot. At the post.

Cassandre. And have you not brought them?

Pierrot. No. You told me only to go and see if there were any. I have seen them and I am come to tell you so.

Cassandre. Heaven give me patience with you! I should be better advised to have gone myself.

Pierrot. Really, sir, if you have not the wit to express yourself properly, what can you expect?

Again Pierrot is the valet of *Cinthio* (an old man) in the *Cause des Femmes*; he believes himself to be alone whilst, as a matter of fact, his master is finishing his supper within earshot close by.

Pierrot. When I come to consider what a woman is, frankly my poor wit goes all to pieces. However I may shut the door, our house is always full of counts and marquises. A lackey brings a letter; his master comes to demand an answer! All night at a ball! All day in merrymakings or at the comedy! What a life for a man of my master's age! Ah, you may do as you like, but you will never be taken for anything but what you are.

Cinthio (*rising*). What do you mean, lackey?

PIERROT. I? Nothing, sir, I was not speaking.

CINTHIO. How, rascal, you were not speaking? Have you not just said that I shall never be taken for anything but what I am?

PIERROT. Yes, sir.

CINTHIO. Well, then, rogue, what am I?

PIERROT. Since you ask me, you are a fool to have married a she-goat of seventeen years of age who finds no house less desirable than yours, and who is for ever trailing a mob of courtiers after her.

Pierrot, like his ancestor Pedrolino, is compounded, it will be seen, of common-sense and simplicity. In him too there is something of the Sancho Pança of Cervantes, at once credulous and sceptical, the eternal type of rustic outspokenness, whom nothing astonishes; it is a type which neither passes nor changes.

The original character of Harlequin after it had been transformed by Domenico was bound to, and did, go out of fashion. Wit is a thing relative to every epoch and to every environment; the jests of that comedian do not now always seem witty to us; among those which have been collected it is impossible to cite more than a certain number. Pierrot, however, might be cited in full; for he exists, and will always exist, on the stage of life itself.

Giuseppe Giaratone, who was a native of Ferrara, had been —as we have seen—but a short while in the troupe when he had the good fortune to create his character of Pierrot on the 4th February 1673. He performed, now in Italian, now in French, until 1697—that is to say, until the suppression of the theatre. He married in France a lady of good family and he lived with her on a little estate which belonged to them in the neighbourhood of Paris. It was thither that he retired, and there that he died.

Antonio Sticotti made his début in peasant parts and as Pierrot in 1729 at the Comédie-Italienne. He retired to Meaux, where he occupied the position of postmaster. He left several comedies which were played with success.

In the theatres of the fairs the most remarkable Pierrots were Prévot in 1707 and Hamoche in 1712. The latter left his theatre to attempt to join the company of the Comédie-Italienne, but he was not received there. In 1725 he repaired to the fair of Saint-Laurent, and his introduction was couched in the following terms: Scaramouche came to announce him to a personification of the Fair and sang:

"Hamoche vous prie
De le recevoir;
Il tempête, il crie,
Voulez-vous le voir?"

The Fair replied:

"C'est ici son centre,
Qu'il entre, qu'il entre."

But the forain audience, by no means flattered at being looked upon as a last resource, hissed Hamoche by way of teaching him a lesson. This punishment so wounded the poor Pierrot that he withdrew from the theatre and died of grief.

From 1715 to 1721 Belloni, remarkable for the extreme simplicity of his performance and for the naïveté and truth of his diction, was another Pierrot of distinction. Then came Dujardin in 1721, Bréon, Maganox, Dourdet, in 1741, and Pietro Sodi, a native of Rome, who was a dancer and mime of very great talent, and the author of many pantomimes, in 1749.

PIERROT

V

The name of Giglio is mentioned for the first time in 1531 in the Italian troupe of the *Intronati;* but this personage, filling the rôles of servant and sometimes of lover, is but very slightly related to the Giglio played in Naples in 1701 by Filipo and Fabienti.

The French Gilles of the eighteenth century is a lineal descendant of Pierrot. His floured countenance assumes under the brush of Watteau that elegance of line and that charm at once naïve and comic with which we are all acquainted.

In 1702 Maillot, the forain actor, played, under the name of Gilles, rôles identical with those of Pierrot, but, no longer with the same simplicity and good sense with which Giaratone had equipped this character. Later, towards 1780, we see the actor Carpentier (Gilles) appropriating the scenes and the business which had been played by Carlin Bertinazzi at the Comédie-Italienne.

The Master. Hola! Gilles! Hola! I am always compelled to shout myself hoarse when I want that rascal. Gilles! Gilles!

Gilles (*arriving very softly and shouting very loudly into his ear*). Here I am, sir. I am not deaf.

The Master (*recoiling*). A plague on the rascal! Does he want to frighten me to death?

Gilles. But then, sir, you were shouting like a stick that has lost its blind man. . . . I was conferring with the postman; he has just brought me a letter, and I was asking him to read it to me when you called me.

The Master. Whence is this letter?

Gilles. I don't know. I barely had time to unseal it. Here it is, sir.

THE MASTER (*reading*). "From the country." . . . What country?

GILLES. Limoges, I suppose.

THE MASTER. Then they ought to say so.

GILLES. Oh! but they are not so wise as that at Limoges. Continue to read, I beseech you.

THE MASTER (*reads*). "My cousin Gilles, this is to advise you that my aunt your mother is dead. . . ."

GILLES (*weeping*). My mother is dead! Oh, sir, behold me an orphan. Who will take care of me henceforth?

THE MASTER. But you are big enough to take care of yourself. I am delighted to see your good natural feelings for your mother. But we are all mortal. . . . Let us proceed with the letter. (*He reads.*) "She has left you fifty crowns——"

GILLES. My mother has left me fifty crowns? Now that is what I call a good woman. Sir, are you quite sure that is right?

THE MASTER. Quite sure. But it seems to me that you are very soon consoled for the loss of your mother.

GILLES. Oh, she was very old.

THE MASTER. I understand. (*He reads.*) "I inform you that your little sister Catine has become a child of pleasure——"

GILLES. My sister Catine a child of pleasure! (*He weeps.*) I shall kill her! I love honour a hundred times better than reputation.

THE MASTER. There, there, be comforted.

GILLES. No, sir; I refuse to be comforted.

THE MASTER. Listen. (*He reads.*) "In four months she amassed six hundred livres."

GILLES (*laughing*). Six hundred livres! But that is very good. My sister Catine was of a saving disposition.

THE MASTER. It looks like it. (*He reads.*) "I must tell you, cousin, that in the course of a quarrel a fortnight ago she received a wound in the face which horribly disfigured her."

GILLES (*weeping*). Oh, my poor little Catine, how I pity you! Alas, that is the fate of nearly all of her kind.

The Master. Wait, my friend. (*He reads.*) "As the wound was dangerous, she made her will, and you profit by it."

Gilles. What a good heart that girl had!

The Master (*reading*). "Soon afterwards she died."

Gilles. Oh, sir, my heart is bursting.

The Master (*reading*). "By this will she leaves you a house furnished in the best style."

Gilles (*laughing*). A house furnished in the best style? Now that was really well done. There's a good girl for you, a good virtuous girl!

The Master. A virtuous girl! (*He reads.*) "But, my dear cousin, a very great disaster followed. The house caught fire and has been burnt, together with all the furniture; what was not burnt was pillaged, and your fifty crowns were also stolen."

Gilles. Fire! Thieves! Sir, I am ruined. Write to them quickly and bid them have recourse to all the town buckets and throw all the water available on that fire.

In the last years of his theatrical career, Carpentier, who for twenty years had been applauded as an excellent Gilles, had contracted the deplorable habit of drunkenness. His director, Barré, had endeavoured by all means to correct him of a vice which ruined his health and harmed him in his profession; but Carpentier took no notice, with the result that from year to year his memory grew more and more infirm until, having forgotten all his old rôles, he was utterly incapable of learning new ones. His director was compelled to confine him to accessory rôles in which he let him do as he liked; thus he was able to continue to allow him a salary without hurting his feelings.

A year passed without his ever appearing on the boards; then one evening, in a piece (*Les Savants de Naissance*) in which the whole company was engaged, Carpentier went to his dressing-room without saying a word to anyone and assumed the costume of a Gascon hairdresser, a part in which he was remarkable.

"The comb over his ear, holding a powder-box under his arm, and a razor-case in his hand, he came to the front and saluted the audience. Everyone present recognised him and universal laughter pealed from the spectators; then applause broke forth not only in front, but even in the wings. Thereupon poor Carpentier began to weep, exclaiming to his comrades, with as much joy as modesty, 'My friends, my friends, they have recognised me. . . . They have recognised me!'"

A few days later he committed suicide by throwing himself from a window.

vi

Peppe-Nappa is a Sicilian personage who, save for the colour of his dress, is absolutely the same as Giglio or Gilles; and there is no Italian mask which in character so closely resembles the French Pierrot. Whilst Giglio is dressed in white flannel, like the Gilles of Watteau, Peppe-Nappa's livery is pale blue. He does not cover his face with flour, although he is very pale; he, like Gilles, wears a white skull-cap, a white or grey hat, and shoes of white leather. He is of a surprising agility, continually dancing and bounding. His eyes and his wan countenance are extremely remarkable and expressive. He is equally lively in his gestures. Very swift in his movements and very supple, he seems, when he collapses upon himself, to be no more than a heap of garments that can never have been filled by flesh and bones.

He is nearly always a servant, sometimes, for instance, to the Barone (the Sicilian old man), upon whom he visits his stupidity. But gluttony is Peppe-Nappa's greatest fault; he has a predilection for kitchens; if he may not always eat in such places, at least he may always inhale what to him is the most delicious of all perfumes.

In a comedy-ballet which is closely related to the *Scuola di Salerno*, Peppe-Nappa is the servant of a schoolmaster, a sort of doctor, who gesticulates in his chair in the course of teaching his pupils. Amongst these, on the school forms, there are some very big girls, towards whom the Doctor shows more indulgence than towards the others. The class is at an end; the schoolmaster wants to go out, and requires his black robe and his tall pointed hat. He rings for Peppe-Nappa, who, after a long delay, comes in yawning. He approaches his master to learn his orders, but falls asleep on his feet, leaning up against him. The latter withdraws and Peppe-Nappa falls down without waking. The furious pedant lifts him up by the skin of his back and, by kicks and blows, contrives to arouse him from his slumber; thereafter he sends him for his robe. Peppe-Nappa goes off and returns dragging the robe behind him; he then helps his master to assume it. Upon his master complaining that the garment is covered with dust, Peppe-Nappa goes to fetch a bucket of water and a broom, and, before the pedant is aware of his intentions, he washes him down from head to foot as he would wash a wall. This done, the good servant, worn out by so much labour, seats himself apart and fans himself with his hat. The furious schoolmaster seizes his ferrule to correct the servant, who adroitly evades the blows, causing them to fall upon the hands of the schoolmaster himself. Peppe-Nappa has a singular way of giving his master his hat. He brings a ladder and leans it against his master's shoulders to enable him to put the hat on his head.

After the departure of the schoolmaster, the class is given over to gaiety. The little boys fight, the little girls cry, and the older girls run to the doors to admit their young lovers, who come to dance with them. But Peppe-Nappa, who has been to accompany his master to the end of the street, re-enters wearing the professor's long black robe, with his head buried in the enormous hat. There is great terror among the youngsters, but they are quick to perceive their mistake, and they are about to fall upon Peppe-Nappa when he threatens to call the master; then two of the more astute ones bring him some macaroni and some eggs to conciliate him. Whilst he is devouring these, and contracting an indigestion, the whole class disappears, the pedant re-enters and discovers Peppe-Nappa torpid from excess of food. Hereupon follow remonstrances and discourses upon frugality, seasoned with blows. The poor servant attempts, by way of showing his repentance of his past conduct, to assist his master to rediscover his pupils. The piece ends in the marriage of all the schoolgirls with their lovers. Peppe-Nappa is the only one who can find no wife.

vii

The Théâtre des Funambules, founded in 1816 by Bertrand, presented spectacles of performing dogs, farces, rope dancers and sometimes pantomimes. The principal mime was Félix Charigny, who, under the name of Pierrot, filled the part of Gilles.

Towards 1830 the Funambules having been transformed into a pantomime and vaudeville theatre, there arose in the person of Deburau a man of genius in his own line, who for fifteen years was able to attract all the lovers of the old French and Italian farces.

In the hands of Deburau, pantomime was then all that remained of the old Italian comedy. The character of Pierrot, however, underwent a complete change. Deburau transformed it as Domenico had transformed Harlequin. By his incomparable talent, which lent itself to all the shades of the mimetic art, he made Pierrot now good, and generous out of carelessness, now a thief, false and sometimes miserly, now cowardly, now daring, and almost always poor ; laziness and gluttony remained his incorrigible faults.

Deburau transformed not only the character, but the externals of this personage. His costume was based, first of all, upon that of Charigny, whom he replaced in 1825. The short woollen tunic, with its great buttons and its narrow sleeves, that overhung the hands, soon became an ample calico blouse with wide long sleeves like those of the Italian Pagliaccio. He suppressed the collar, which cast an upward shadow from the footlights on to his face, and interfered with the play of his countenance, and instead of the white skull-cap and the pointed hat of his predecessor, he emphasised the pallor of his face by framing it in a cap of black velvet. To-day Pagliaccio would rather be considered the proper name for this type; but since he was generally recognised for Pierrot, that name is to be preserved him.

"With him [Deburau]," says M. Théophile Gautier, "the rôle of Pierrot was enlarged and widened; it ended by occupying the entire piece, and, be it said with all the respect due to the memory of the most perfect actor that ever lived, by entirely departing from its origin and being denaturalised. Pierrot, under the flour and the tunic of that illustrious actor, assumed the airs of a master and an *aplomb* unsuited to the character; he no longer received kicks, he gave them; Harlequin now scarcely dared to touch his shoulders with his bat; Cassandre would think twice before boxing his ears. He would kiss Columbine and pass an arm about her waist like a seducer of comic opera; he caused the entire action of the piece to revolve about himself, and he attained such a degree of insolence and audacity that he would even beat his own good genius. The strong personality of the great actor overbore the type."

> "Et du Pierrot blafard brisant le masque étroit,
> Le front de Deburau perçait en maint endroit."

M. Jules Janin has published a biography of Deburau entitled, "DEBURAU, *Histoire du Théâtre à Quatre-Sous, pour faire suite à l'histoire du Théâtre-Français*, 1833."

"Being unable to develop enthusiasm for the Théâtre-Français," he says, "we will become enthusiastic where we can; for instance, in the boulevard theatres. It is in one of these ignored theatres, in the meanest and the most infected, by the light of four wretched candles and in a mephitic atmosphere, situated alongside of a menagerie which bellows whilst the actors are singing, that we have discovered, admired and applauded with all our strength the great comedian, who is also the great clown, Deburau.

"The greatest comedian of our age, Jean-Baptiste Deburau, was born on the 31st July 1796. How he comes to be Deburau I cannot tell you. The fact is, that he has revolutionised his art. He has in truth created an entirely new race of clowns when it was supposed that all the possible varieties had been exhausted. He has replaced petulance by calm, enthusiasm by good sense. In him we no longer see the Paillasse agitated hither and thither, without reason and without aim; we behold instead a stoic who allows himself mechanically to follow all the impressions of the moment, an actor without passion, without words and almost without countenance; one who says everything, expresses everything, mocks everything; capable of playing, without uttering a word, all the comedies of Molière; one who is informed of all the follies of his day, and who reproduces them to the life; an inimitable genius who goes and comes, who looks, who opens his mouth, who closes his eyes, who causes laughter and tears, who is enchanting!

"His fate to-day is as brilliant as it was erstwhile sad. M. Nicolas-Michel Bertrand, the Director of the Funambules, has given his Gilles an engagement worthy of him. After many useless labours and many fruitless researches in the archives of the kingdom of Comedy, we have had the good fortune to discover the following important document bearing upon the history of this art:—

“SPECTACLE DES FUNAMBULES

“*Agreement*

“Between the undersigned, M. Nicolas-Michel Bertrand, of the Boulevard du Temple, No. 18, Paris, Director of the Funambules Theatre, of the one part,

“And M. Jean-Baptiste Deburau, of the Faubourg du Temple, No. 28, Paris, artist-mime, of the other part:

“It is agreed between us as follows:

“First, I, Bertrand, engage by these presents M. Deburau, to perform in the troupe the parts of Pierrot, and generally all the rôles which may be assigned to him by me or my manager.

“Second, I, Jean-Baptiste Deburau, engage myself to perform all rôles, to dance and take part in the ballets, divertissements, pantomimes and all other pieces, together with the company wherever sent for fêtes, private or public, without exacting any extras beyond the expenses of transit.

“I consent to conform to the rules established or to be established for the performances, and to content myself with such lighting, heating and costumes as may be supplied me by the administration.

“In case of illness the Director reserves himself the right to suspend the salary of the artist until the day of his reappearance.

“The artist is under obligation to supply, according to his costumes, his own linen, stockings, foot-wear, gloves and grease-paints. The administration will supply the costumes and properties, etc., etc.

“Subject to the above clause being faithfully executed, M. Bertrand undertakes to pay M. Deburau the sum of 35 francs weekly throughout the present engagement. The present engagement is for three years. It will begin on Easter Monday of 1828, and conclude on Palm Sunday, 1831.

“The parties hereunto desire mutually that this agreement shall have the same force and value as if drawn before a notary, and the first to infringe it shall pay to the other damages in the fixed sum of 1000 francs.

"Given in duplicate and in good faith, etc., 10th Dec. 1826.

"(*Signed*) BERTRAND.
"DEBURAU.

"*Additional clause.*

"M. Deburau undertakes moreover the care of the properties of any piece performed—that is to say, he will look after them and distribute them every evening, and lock them up after the performance, etc.

"In consideration of this further clause M. Bertrand undertakes to pay M. Deburau 10 francs weekly in addition to his salary, and this is accepted by the latter.

"(*Signed*) BERTRAND.
"DEBURAU."

The spectacular pantomime-harlequinades in which Deburau was extraordinary for his spirit, his gestures, and his facial play, in which he abandoned himself to all manner of fantasies, were: *Le Bœuf Enragé, Ma Mère L'Oie, La Mauvaise Tête, Le Billet de Mille Francs.*

Les Épreuves, a great pantomime-harlequinade in thirteen scenes, in the English manner, by Deburau and M. Charles, was cast in the following manner:—*Harlequin,* Cossard; *Pierrot,* Deburau; *Pandolphe,* Laplace; *Léandre,* Orphée; *Isabella,* Mademoiselle Isménie; *La Fée,* Madame Lefèvre.

Isabella is the daughter of old Pandolphe. She is in love with Harlequin, who is protected by a fairy. Léandre wishes to marry Isabella, who runs away with her lover. Pandolphe, followed by his servant Pierrot and by Léandre, the possessor of a talisman, pursues them.

Pierrot is in a public place. Instead of following his master, he is sniffing round a pastrycook's shop and at last decides to enter it; within he discovers his mistake; the shop is a milliner's. Having no use for the bonnets that are offered him, he goes out again in quest of the pastrycook, whose shop is on the other side of the square. But the shops perform a fantastic *chassé-croisée*, and Pierrot discovers himself once more at the milliner's. This being several times repeated, Pierrot is worn out and ends by being amused. He loses his head and performs incoherences. He upsets the shoemaker's stall and then assumes such absurd and ridiculous poses before the customers of a vintner that they depart scandalised. After several pleasantries, some of them of a distinctly coarse order, he draws down punishment upon his head. His dupes unite against him and, being ten to one, they valiantly pursue Pierrot. Pandolphe and the beautiful Léandre come to his aid and a battle royal is fought with broom-sticks.

In the next scene Pierrot, to throw his enemies off the scent, conceals himself under the garments of a mountebank. He arrives in the midst of a village fête, and there, assisted by Pandolphe, who plays the fiddle, and Léandre, who plays the trombone, he beats a big drum as if his aim were to burst it. The village folk begin to dance, but presently become angry, for no apparent reason. Pierrot and his acolytes have little chance against them, and they escape before the blows that threaten.

Next, Pierrot's head is cut off in a tavern. It is glued on again. The doctor, who is none other than Harlequin, demands his fee, but Pierrot pretends that his head is not properly re-attached, and receives a shower of blows from the false doctor.

In the following scene he is disguised as a woman, no doubt with a view to escaping from the ill intentions of Harlequin. He is about to do his washing when, after the fashion of pantomimic fantasy, an Englishman with red whiskers and an impossible collar comes to order Pierrot to wash some soiled linen. Pierrot finds the task disgusting, refuses it, and ends by throwing the Englishman into the tub, whereupon he runs away.

He is again in a tavern, and, after an adventure with a thief, he finds himself in need of a bath. He seeks the baths, but in that country there are no baths except for women. He assumes a bonnet and a petticoat, and enters one of those establishments, wherein he is badly received, for under a stroke of the fairy's wand the baths are changed into a roasting-house and Pierrot finds himself roasting on a grille.

Delivered from this, and having no longer any garments, he enlists and becomes a soldier that he may be clothed. He quarrels with the corporal and fights a duel with pistols. Pierrot loads his own weapon with nothing but a candle, but he plants this candle full in the face of his adversary. This remarkable feat of arms causes him to be appointed drum-major on the spot. He immediately holds a review of the drummers, the oldest of whom is not four years of age.

The piece ends by an apotheosis in which we behold the rout of Léandre, who has lost his talisman. Harlequin and Isabella are united by a cupid with cardboard wings, arrayed in a garland of roses, and a sky-blue tunic: he extends his protecting arms over the two lovers and promises them a life of eternal happiness.

"It has been pretended," says M. Champfleury, "that Deburau died as the result of a fall at the Funambules. Deburau died of asthma, which had been undermining his health for five years.

"His medical advisers had prescribed for him a long period of rest; but he thought only of his public. For five years he was afflicted by a cough that tore his lungs. But the moment he appeared on the stage the affliction would leave him; he would become once more for a quarter of an hour young, happy and healthy. The terrible disease, however, awaited him in the wings, and would lay its claws on the breast of the mime every time he made his exit.

"The cough became so tyrannical that Deburau was compelled to rest. One day he felt better. The bills announced his reappearance. At most, he had been absent for three weeks, but as a consequence there was a long impatient queue that would have filled five theatres.

"Be it noted that the performance was *Les Noces de Pierrot,* a farce which had been played six hundred times at the theatre of the Funambules. The shouts and roars of the spectators during the first half of the evening may be imagined. Outside, those who had been unable to enter shouted still more loudly. After the three vaudevilles the usual three knocks were heard.

"The curtain rose slowly. Deburau appeared in his white costume, a posy in his button-hole, a pretty girl on his arm. It is impossible to conceive an idea of the enthusiasm in the theatre; it was frenetic. In the gods four hundred faces were alight with joy; eight hundred eyes devoured the mime; four hundred mouths roared 'Bravo!' The heights of delirium were reached. Those who had been unable to enter shouted outside the door.

"Deburau quite simply placed his hand on his heart below his bridegroom's posy. A tear ploughed through the flour on his countenance.

"A real tear is so rare in the theatre!

"A little while afterwards a slight incident proved the solemnity of this performance. At the introduction of the pantomime the peasants—boys and girls—are grouped upon the stage. Apart, the bailie, who is a traitor, plots his infamies. The orchestra plays the refrain of the dance.

"Ordinarily Deburau would now execute one of those eccentric dances the secret of which died with him; it was a mixture of the steps of the Directoire and of the more audacious steps of the *cancan*. More than ordinarily affected, his heart too full of joy, Deburau did not dance.

"'The *chahut*!' cried a rough voice.

"'No, no!' replied the whole theatre.

"The most vulgar of publics has its moments of exquisite delicacy. It had understood the emotion of the great comedian.

"Towards midnight there was a great gathering at the stage door. Deburau came forth. He had preserved, no doubt through a presentiment, his white bridegroom's posy. It was the posy of his nuptials with Death.

"A thousand voices shouted: 'Vive Deburau!' But Death, that cruel ghoul, was in haste to embrace her pale bridegroom.

"He died a few days later (1846)."

A little while before this last performance of which M. Champfleury writes, an incident took place in a performance of the *Épreuves* which showed the public's affection for Deburau; it was the occasion of the fall to which his death has been wrongly attributed.

At the end of the tenth scene Deburau was to disappear through a trap-door, and this was not working properly. He stamped impatiently with his foot upon the trap, and it was precisely at this moment that it gave way. His body had lost its poise and, as he went through, his head was thrown back and struck the stage. The scene being changed, the manager came forward to announce that M. Deburau was wounded. The audience was about to withdraw, after having expressed its sympathy with the mime, when Deburau himself appeared and wished to continue. "Enough! enough!" was cried on every side by the idolatrous public, but by a gesture Pierrot made them understand that he was too deeply touched not to continue, and the theatre shook with the applause and the bravos of the spectators.

George Sand, who was in one of the stage boxes, having perceived him in the wings holding his head in an attitude of pain, went on the morrow to inquire his condition. He wrote her his thanks for the inquiry and at the same time for an article in praise of him which she had published in the *Constitutionnel*:

"MADAME,—Permit me to address you my double thanks for the interest you are kind enough to take in a little accident which has had no serious consequences for me, and for the kindly article published in the *Constitutionnel*, in which, concerning yourself benevolently for my future, you extol my poor talent with a warmth and a spirit that are really irresistible.

"I hardly know in what terms to express my gratitude. My pen is like my voice on the stage, but my heart is like my countenance, and I pray you to accept its sincere expression.

"I have the honour to be your servant,

"DEBURAU.

"*P.S.*—It was my intention to go to thank you in person, but rehearsals have prevented this. Be good enough, I beg you, to excuse me.

"PARIS, 9 *Feb.* 1846."

"Deburau was charming in all his ways. He would never be tempted to the least drop of champagne, out of fear, he said, for his nerves, and because he required the completest self-possession for his performances. I have never seen an artist who was more serious, more conscientious, more religious in his art. He loved it passionately, and spoke of it as of a grave thing, whilst always speaking of himself with the extremest modesty. He studied incessantly and was never weary, notwithstanding continued and even excessive playing. He did not trouble to think whether the admirable subtleties of his play of countenance and his originality of composition were appreciated by artists. He worked to satisfy himself and to realise his fancy. This fancy, which appeared to be so spontaneous, was studied beforehand, with extraordinary care" (George Sand: *Histoire de Ma Vie*).

Deburau's son took up his father's career in 1847. He was perhaps the handsomest and most elegant Pierrot that was ever seen. By his suppleness, his grace and charming fantasy, he rightly acquired an enormous vogue.

Paul Legrand, born at Saintes in 1820, played at first in the Théâtre des Funambules, comic parts in vaudeville and the rôles of Léandre in pantomime. It was only in 1845 that he undertook the rôles of Pierrot. A pupil of Deburau, he succeeded him in this character in 1847. He sustained in that theatre and afterwards with honour in the *Folies-Nouvelles* his double rivalry with the memory of Deburau and the deserved success of Deburau's son. He was less elegant in shape than the latter, but none the less pleasing to the eye by his attitudes. He was full of resources, gifted with a handsome countenance, and a very characteristic expression, full of comical and bizarre notions and inventions, and—and this in particular distinguishes his talent—he had a peculiar power of producing pathetic and dramatic effects. Like the celebrated Thomassin, he drew laughter and tears at one and the same time; so that he may be reckoned as a mime of the very first order.

The first creations of Paul Legrand at the Funambules were: *L'Œuf Rouge et l'Œuf Blanc*, *Pierrot Valet de la Mort*, *Pierrot Pendu*, by M. Champfleury; *Pierrot Recompensé*, *Pierrot Marquis*, etc.

Summoned to London in December 1847 by Madame Céleste, who was managing the Adelphi Theatre, he remained for a year in England. But the English, accustomed to the much more exaggerated performances of their clowns, could make nothing of the subtle and witty expressions of the French Pierrot. Legrand returned to the Funambules in 1849, to find himself replaced there by Deburau's son. But all Pierrots are brothers. They played concurrently together: *Les Deux Pierrots, Des Trois Pierrots,* with Dimier, called Calpestri; *Les Deux Blancs,* etc.

In 1853, a new pantomime theatre having been opened (Les Folies-Nouvelles), Legrand was engaged there, and from that day, being the master of his actions and able to give a free rein to his fancy, he invested the type of Pierrot with an originality and a unique colour of his own.

viii

The English Pierrot, or rather the English Clown, is a bizarre and fantastic creation not based upon any French type. The Florentine Stenterello alone may be compared with him by his singular methods. And what an extraordinary fancy has presided over the dressing of this personage, who seems to have been born among the savages of America! He is arrayed in a tight-fitting tunic, white, red, yellow, green, in stripes, in squares or in circles; his face is pasted with flour, set off with stripes, with moustachios, with impossible eyebrows; his cheeks are raddled with a brutal carmine; his forehead is carried up to the summit of the occiput and surmounted by a wig of a blazing red, from the height of which a little stiff queue lifts itself towards heaven. His manners are no less singular than his costume. He is not mute, like our Pierrot; on the contrary, he holds forth in an extremely buffoon manner and is in addition a very able acrobat. Kemp and Boxwell, circus clowns, were the types of this personage. It was impossible to see Boxwell without admiring his strength and his adroitness, and without laughing at his versatility and bizarre effects.

To define the English clown, M. Champfleury cites the following passage borrowed from Baudelaire :—

"The English Pierrot is by no means the personage pale as the moon, mysterious as silence, supple and mute as the serpent, lean and long as a pole, to which we were accustomed by Deburau. The English Pierrot enters like a tempest, falls like a bale, and shakes the house when he laughs. This laughter resembles a joyful thunderstorm. He is a short thick fellow, who has increased his bulk by a costume loaded with ribbons which fill upon his person the same office as the feathers on a bird, or the hair upon a Persian cat. Over the flour on his countenance he has plastered crudely, without gradation or transition, two enormous discs of pure scarlet. His mouth is increased by a simulated prolongation of the lips carried out in two carmine strokes, so that when he laughs this mouth of his seems to open from ear to ear. As for the character, at bottom it is the same as that which we know: egotistical heedlessness and neutrality; hence the accomplishment of all rapacious and gluttonous fancies, to the detriment now of Harlequin, now of Cassandre, and of Léandre. But with this difference, that where Deburau thrust in the point of his finger that he might afterwards lick it, the clown thrusts in both hands and both feet, and this may express all that he does; his is the vertigo of hyperbole. This Pierrot passes by a woman who is washing her doorstep; after having emptied her pockets he seeks to cram into his own the sponge, the broom, the soap and even the very water itself."

PIERROT

This exaggerated personage of the English pantomime is a direct descendant of the clownish peasants of the theatre of Shakespeare. No dramatic author ever understood his public as did he. He knew not only how to captivate the attention of Queen Elizabeth and her court by presenting such heroes as no longer existed in his day, but he knew also how to amuse and satisfy his coarse groundlings, who drank and smoked throughout the performance. He knew how to put into the mouth of his clowns exactly what each naïve spectator would have said under similar circumstances. He knew, in short, how to adapt to the English stage the eternal type of Bertoldo.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century a dancer, acrobat and mime named Grimaldi made his appearance on the stage of the Comédie-Italienne in Paris. Dancing one day before the Turkish ambassador, he gave such a leap in honour of his Excellency that he struck his head against the crystal lustre suspended above it. One of the girandoles, detached by the blow, struck the ambassador of the Sublime Porte on the nose and narrowly missed putting out one of his eyes. The Turk in a passion laid a complaint before his ministry, demanding no doubt the bastinado as a punishment for the clumsy dancer. But the minister condemned Grimaldi merely to make a public apology to the inviolable representative of the Grand Turk.

Grimaldi had a son, Giuseppe Grimaldi, who had a long career in the fairs of Italy and France, dancing and singing in pantomime. In 1755 he went to England to play in the ballet pantomimes at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. The critics of the time found only one fault with this Italian buffoon, who became an English clown, that of being too comical. He died in 1788.

One of his sons, Joe Grimaldi, enjoyed great celebrity in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a mime at Drury Lane. Charles Dickens did not disdain to edit and publish his Memoirs.

VI

LELIO

In our theatres to-day the part of the lover may be the great leading rôle, or it may fall to the lot of the juvenile lead, or even to that of the comedian. But in the old Italian comedy the lover was just the lover; as it happened, however, that he almost invariably found himself in a comic situation he was nearly always what to-day we should call the comic lover. The endowments required were a fine figure, a handsome face, an agreeable voice, and the elegant manners of a gentleman of the great world. The portraits which have survived show us handsome men dressed in the latest mode of their day.

But the lover, playing sometimes in two different styles of piece, was a serious comedian. Ordinarily this part was undertaken by the chief of the troupe, like Flaminio Scala, who, under the name of Flavio, was an illustrious comedian.

ii

Flavio was a name that had already served to qualify lovers on the Italian stage before Flaminio Scala.

The young Flavio of Ruzzante in *La Vaccaria* (1533) is thus described by his rival, the rich Polidoro:

" Because he is beautiful, gallant, fecund in sonnets, because he knows music and takes his manners from the court, Flavio imagines that he will be able to hold the love of Fiorinetta! But what will he do when he perceives that money conquers everything? He will curse the contrariness of Fate and the mercilessness of Heaven."

Polidoro represents the rich, discourteous and overbearing lover. But the beautiful, the elegant gentleman of this epoch, he who, without money, pleases women, who is the mirror of fashion and the flower of wit, is not without being ridiculous upon occasion, and we suspect Ruzzante of having designedly shown him under an effeminate aspect in his comedy *Anconitana.*

Two young gallants of the epoch, sons of a good Sicilian family, are reduced by romantic vicissitudes to the necessity of earning their living, and all that they are capable of doing is to seek service with some noble lady. One of them does so in the capacity of a poet, promising to praise her eternally in prose and in verse:

> "I shall study how to sing the praises of her charms in choice rhymes, and I shall laud, I shall extol adoringly, now her enchanting eyes, now her blond tresses, now her lovely neck, now her white hand, now her soft glance, her words, her gestures, her grace, her virtues, her garments, her movements; and that in various manners, in chapters, in epistles, in epilogues, in eclogues, in songs, in impromptus, in sonnets, in madrigals, in stanzas, in odes, and in ballads."

The other brother, contemning the frivolity of such employment, offers himself in the capacity of a valet and perfumer:

"The ladies to whom I shall give my services need not fear those pomades and unguents which are plastered on to the lips of their husbands when they kiss them. I know how to distil perfumes from plants and trees which not only beautify the face and neck, but further steep the flesh in sweet odours; I can distil waters to render tresses curly and golden, waters to smooth the brow, waters to darken the eyebrows, waters to tint the cheeks, waters to render the lips rosy, the teeth dazzling, the neck white, the hands soft. Their virtues, employed on the different parts of the body, will last three days and three nights, and they will not be succeeded, as is the case with vulgar unguents, by that pallor mottled with various colours which disfigures the countenance on the morrow. I have scents of musk, of ambergris, of lavender, of styrax, with which I mingle the juices of certain other herbs or flowers, producing essences so sweet that I consider these aromas capable of preserving body and soul. Waters of jasmine, of orange flowers, of citron, I repute of no account because I shall distil essences from unknown plants which will be infinitely preferred to all those that are considered most admirable and most precious to-day."

In 1576 Flaminio Scala (Flavio), *comico acceso* (impassioned comic, or lover), being then in the prime of youth and the fulness of his talent, placed himself at the head of the *Gelosi* troupe and, for twenty-eight years, was able to command the applause of Italy and France. This troupe, reconstituted in Venice in 1576, went to Blois in 1577 to perform before King Henry III.; later the company was seen at the Hôtel de Bourbon, which at the time was no more than a chapel with a gallery where a theatre was set up upon occasion for the court fêtes. The ordinary headquarters of the *Gelosi* company were in Florence. Thence it went out to tour the principal cities of Italy and of France.

From 1576 to 1604 the actors playing the rôles of lover in this remarkable troupe were: Flavio (Flaminio Scala), Oratio (Orazio Nobili, born at Padua), Cinthio (Cintio Fidenzi), Fabrizio, and Aurelio (Adriano Valerini, a Veronese gentleman, doctor of law and a fairly good Latin poet). Valerini left the *Gelosi* troupe in 1579 to undertake the direction of the *Comici uniti*. At the head of this troupe he was received in 1583 by Cardinal Carlo Borromeo in Milan.

The leading ladies (or *amoureuses*) in the *Gelosi* during that period were: Isabella (Isabella Andreini), Flaminia, Ardelia, Lidia (second wife of G. B. Andreini) and Laura.

The soubrettes were Franceschina (Silvia Roncagli), Vittoria (Antonella Bajardi), Ricciolina (Maria Antonazzoni), Olivetta, Ortensia, and Nespola. The old women were played under the name of Pasquella.

The lackeys were Pedrolino, Arlecchino, Burattino, Grillo, Mezzetino, Cavicchio (a peasant), Ciccialboncio (a peasant), Bigolo, Memmei, Piombino.

The old men were Doctor Graziano, Pantalone, Zanobio, Cassandro, Cornelio, Tosano, Adorne, Claudio and Cataldo. Captain Spavento was played by Francesco Andreini and Sireno was one of the first parts played by Domenico Bruni (Fulvio), who joined the company in 1594.

Bruni, who was the son of an old comedian, was then fourteen years of age; he was starved and almost naked when given shelter by Scala and engaged to improvise odd parts until he should reach an age that would permit him to play lovers. A few years later he passed into the service of the Princess of Piedmont.

The two most remarkable appearances made in France by Flaminio Scala and his company seem to be those of 1588 and 1600, when he was accompanied by the famous Isabella Andreini, her husband and her son. After the death of Isabella, Flaminio Scala, weary of the theatre, gave up the direction of the troupe, which was disbanded. He occupied himself then with the publication of his dramatic works, which amount to over fifty, and further he assisted his friend Francesco Andreini to publish the manuscripts which Isabella had left.

Flaminio Scala's collection is entitled: "Theatre of performable fables, or of comic, rustic and tragic recreation; divided into 50 days. All composed by Flaminio Scala, named Flavio, comedian to the Most Serene Lord Duke of Mantua. In Venice 1611."[1]

In the scenarii of this collection the scenes are given in great detail but absolutely without dialogue. Nevertheless no one before Scala had ever taken the same degree of pains. Until then, nothing had ever been prearranged beyond mere fragments of detached scenes, business that might be termed classic, traditions of the Atellanæ, interposed more or less suitably into the scenarii for free improvisations.

Flaminio Scala was the first to produce scenarii displaying lucidity and continuity of theme; they deserve indeed to be recognised as his own work. He performed them all over Italy as well as the comedies of Groto, of Lasca, of Cecchi, and of Beolco, and even some tragedies and some opera-ballets. This method of playing in the two styles, the impromptu and the academic, was continued until the eighteenth century by the companies that travelled in Italy, France and Germany.

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[1] "*Il TEATRO delle favole rappresentative, overo la ricreatione comica, boscareccia e tragica; divisa in cinquanta giornate. Composte da Flaminio Scala, detto Flavio, comico del sereniss. sig. duca di Mantoua. In Venetia* 1661."

Flaminio Scala's collection is prefaced by an interesting speech "to courteous readers" written by Francesco Andreini (known as *Capitan Spavento*), in which there is proof that Flaminio Scala was the first serious author and editor of scenarii properly so called.

> "The man who is born into this world must, in his youth, apply himself to ways of merit that he may live honourably, content himself and please others; for an ignorant man is vicious and evil to himself and noxious to his neighbour. Thus he who would arrive at any sort of perfection must make choice of one of the seven liberal arts and practise it. I shall not speak of Lysippus and Roscius, of Socrates, of Titus, of Varro, nor of many others who, from coarse and ignorant that they were, rendered themselves great and immortal by means of knowledge and of virtue. . . . I will confine myself to saying that the Signor Flaminio Scala, known as Flavio in the theatre, conforming to these maxims of conduct, devoted himself from his youth to the noble exercises of comedy (a thing not degrading to his noble birth) and in this practice he made such progress that he deserved to be placed in the front rank of good comedians. . . . That is why the Signor Flavio, after long years consecrated to playing in comedy, wishes to bequeath to the world not his beautiful words, not his magnificent conceits, but his comedies, which in all seasons and in all places have brought him the greatest

honour. The Signor Flavio might have elaborated his works (his talent being ample for such a task) and written them word for word, as authors are in the habit of doing. But as to-day too many comedies are seen printed with different versions, thereby undermining all good rules, he desired, by this *his new invention*, to publish only the scenarii of his comedies, leaving to the actors' wit the care of supplying suitable dialogue."

Francesco Andreini adds that, to facilitate the performance and the production of his pieces, Scala has supplied an argument for each, has named and described the characters, and has prepared the list of costumes and properties necessary under the designation of *robbe per la commedia.*

This list is curious as revealing a somewhat complicated *mise en scène*: thus: "One head resembling that of a prince of Morocco; one fine valise of leather; one cudgel for beating; one plate of figs and several lanterns; four lighted white candles; two Hungarian vests; one live cat and one live cock; two fires with smoke; several shirts in which to dress up Harlequin as a woman; four hunting dogs and a grotesque hunting-dress for Harlequin; one casket of jewels, one chemise and one dagger for Isabella; two boxes of bonbons; one packet of candles and one piece of cheese; two identical rings; a large cheval-glass and a good deal of coin; six lanterns; two coats and two false beards with which to dress up two notaries; a composition to imitate blood from a wound; a basket with a packet of letters inside; one miniature of a woman; one beard similar to that of Pantaloon; one travelling suit—*i.e.* one felt hat, boots and spurs; one shirt, soiled and wet, for the Captain; one practicable moon; two rockets; one large tree, in which one may sit; four fine costumes for nymphs; several painted trees; two live babies; one beautiful ship; one earthquake; etc., etc."

It may throw a useful light upon a theatrical epoch of which but little is known to translate as a specimen one of the scenarii or days (*giornate*) of Flaminio Scala, not as a work of any value to-day, but as a proof of the relative ability already attained by the authors and the comedians of the Commedia dell' Arte.

THIRD DAY

"THE WILES OF ISABELLA"

Argument

A pretty widow of quality persuades her own brother to conduct her lover to her upon the pretext that she wishes to marry him to a young girl whom he has betrayed and abandoned. The brother, discovering the ruse, and knowing the lover to be worthy of his sister, consents to their marriage.

Characters in the Comedy

PANTALONE, a Venetian.
PEDROLINO, his lackey.
FLAVIO, the lover of FLAMINIA.
ORAZIO, the brother of ISABELLA.
ISABELLA, a widow, sister to ORAZIO, in love with CAPTAIN SPAVENTO.
ARLECCHINO, servant to ORAZIO and ISABELLA.
CAPTAIN SPAVENTO, ISABELLA'S lover.
FLAMINIA, sister to SPAVENTO, in love with FLAVIO.
BURATTINO, an innkeeper.
FRANCESCHINA, his wife.
Two rogues, friends of PEDROLINO.
Two thieves, acting on their own account.

LELIO

Properties for the Comedy

A good deal of coin; costumes for three beggars; a sign for an inn; a pair of shoes; a knife to cut; a basket with edible victuals; a lantern; a kitchen spit; a long stick.

Scene: Perugia

ACT I

CAPTAIN SPAVENTO, FLAVIO *and later* FLAMINIA

Spavento relates to his friend Flavio that he is in love with Isabella, a widow of quality and Orazio's sister. Knowing him to be a friend of Orazio's, he begs him to speak to the latter and to endeavour to obtain for him the hand of his sister Isabella. Flavio promises to do his best and in his turn discovers to the Captain that he too is in love and that he has just written a love letter. Flaminia shows herself at her window, calls her brother the Captain and bids him come inside, telling him that letters have just arrived for him; thereupon she withdraws. Flavio, having observed that she had a book in her hand, asks the Captain what it is that his sister studies so assiduously. The Captain replies that from morning till night she does nothing but read romances of chivalry and histories of love. Flavio begs the Captain to correct the letter, which he has written, before despatching it to his beloved. The Captain takes it, saying that he will give it for correction to his sister Flaminia, who is better educated than himself. He goes indoors after reminding Flavio of his promise to speak of him to Orazio. Flavio rejoices at the good fortune which thus places his letter in the hands of his adored Flaminia. (*He goes off.*)

PANTALOON *and* PEDROLINO

Pantaloon confesses to his lackey that he is in love with Isabella and asks his advice as to how to go about making her his wife. "The way would be to marry her," replies Pedrolino. Pantaloon then relates how, after having betrayed his waiting-woman Franceschina, he married her to Burattino the innkeeper with a dowry of 500 livres and that further he has promised to present her with 1000 ducats on the birthday of her first boy. Pedrolino highly praises such a work of charity and extols the generosity of his master. Knowing him so munificent, he will gladly assist him in his endeavours to obtain Isabella in marriage. Whereupon they go off.

FRANCESCHINA, BURATTINO, *and then* ISABELLA *and the* CAPTAIN

They enter chatting of their little household affairs, of their position, which is none too brilliant, but which would be greatly improved if Franceschina were to give birth to a boy, since Pantaloon has promised to pay her 1000 ducats on that day. Burattino tells his wife that this depends upon herself. Franceschina replies that the fault is his, etc. They mutually reproach each other and end by quarrelling. The noise they make brings Isabella to her window. She rebukes Franceschina for quarrelling thus with her husband. But Burattino answers her insolently, bidding her to mind her own business. The Captain, entering at this moment, takes up the defence of his adored Isabella and threatens to strike Burattino. Isabella implores mercy for Burattino and sends him away together with Franceschina after giving them money so that they shall cease quarrelling.

The CAPTAIN, ISABELLA, *then* HARLEQUIN *and* FLAVIO

The Captain, after extravagantly saluting Isabella, craves news of her brother and of Flavio. Isabella replies that she has not seen them and receives the homage of the Captain, who is extremely gallant, and utters a thousand honeyed phrases. But the amorous interview is interrupted by Harlequin, the servant of the house, who becomes angry with Isabella and compels her to go with him, threatening to divulge everything to her brother Orazio, who cannot tolerate the Captain. The Captain in a rage threatens Harlequin, who strikes him. Flavio separates them, dismissing Harlequin, who goes off hurling frightful threats at the Captain. The Captain in a furious rage runs after him.

FLAVIO, *then* FLAMINIA, HARLEQUIN, *the* CAPTAIN *and* ORAZIO

Monologue of Flavio on his love for Flaminia. She appears at her window. After the customary greetings Flavio asks her if she has received a love letter of which her brother took charge, to the end that she might correct it. Flaminia replies that she has received the letter and that she has not failed to perceive that it is addressed to herself. Flavio confesses the truth and declares his passion, but they are interrupted by the Captain and Harlequin, the latter armed with a cudgel. They make a deal of noise shouting and fighting. Orazio is between them seeking to separate them. Flavio runs to his assistance; and, pushing, shouting and insulting one another, they all go off.

BURATTINO *and then two thieves*

Burattino, having gone to buy provisions for the inn, with the money received from Isabella, returns with a basketful of victuals. But he wishes first to eat four mouthfuls before going home. He sits down in mid-stage and begins to eat; two thieves arrive and greet him very politely, seating themselves without ceremony one on each side of him. One of them opens the conversation by stating that he is from Cucagna, a country where the people eat well and copiously. During this time his companion consumes part of Burattino's provisions. Having finished, he begins to talk, and, attracting the attention of Burattino, who listens to him with gaping mouth, he delivers himself of a speech in three parts upon indelicacy, and the rigorous punishment awaiting thieves. Whilst he is talking the first orator from Cucagna devours the remainder of the basket's contents. Thereafter they take their leave with extreme politeness, and depart. Burattino, recovering from the bewilderment caused him by their flow of speech, disposes himself to resume his eating; discovering, however, nothing but emptiness, he enters his inn weeping. This closes the first Act.

ACT II

FLAVIO, ORAZIO, HARLEQUIN, *and then the* CAPTAIN

Flavio begs Orazio to put aside all rancour and out of friendship for him to make his peace with the Captain, who is much more friendly disposed than he supposes. Orazio consents. The Captain arrives. At sight of him Harlequin runs away, enters the house and from the window desires to be reassured that his enemy's choler has abated. Flavio presently reassures him and then, having restored peace between Orazio and the Captain, they all depart rejoicing in this sound friendship.

PANTALOON, PEDROLINO, *then* ISABELLA *and* FLAMINIA

Pantaloon, who has witnessed the departure of the young people, thinks that the moment may be favourable to speak to Isabella. He coughs, scratches the door, and performs other antics to draw attention to his presence. Isabella shows herself at her window and out of coquetry announces that she is going for a walk. At the same time she signs to Flaminia, who is at the window of her house opposite, to join her in the street. Isabella and Flaminia enter the stage and allow Pantaloon and his servant to chat with them. Isabella, pretending to find his eloquence irresistible, confesses herself in love with Pantaloon, and Flaminia does the like by Pedrolino. But Isabella requires a proof of affection, and begs Pantaloon to come and serenade her that same evening. Pantaloon promises three serenades, whereafter each lady re-enters her own house, and Pantaloon, with Pedrolino, both intoxicated with joy, leap and dance like a pair of fools. This brings out

Franceschina and Burattino, who deride their singular capers. Pantaloon goes off.

BURATTINO, FRANCESCHINA, PEDROLINO

Burattino and his wife continue to jest with Pedrolino. The latter ends by being angry and threatens vengeance. As the innkeeper's laughter is only increased by this, Pedrolino threatens to make him a *cornuto*. Burattino laughs at the threat, but Franceschina fetches a broom and falls upon Pedrolino, who runs away. Thereafter the couple re-enter, rejoicing in his discomfiture.

FLAVIO *and* ISABELLA

Flavio enters, complaining of his uncertainty on the score of whether Flaminia loves him or not, and seeking a pretext for addressing her again. The letter which he has written and which is in her hands is a means. Isabella, from her window, has heard the entire monologue, and, to amuse herself, asks him if he has met Orazio and the Captain, who are seeking him to invite him to their nuptials, as Orazio is going to marry Flaminia and the Captain is going to marry herself. This said, she withdraws, laughing in her sleeve. Flavio is overcome by this unexpected news. Burattino, seeing him preoccupied, accosts him and asks him if, by chance, he knows of any means for the getting of male children. Flavio turns and, without uttering a word, goes off. Burattino, distressed at not having received an answer, re-enters his inn.

PANTALOON, PEDROLINO, *three musicians*, ISABELLA *and* FLAMINIA

Pantaloon and Pedrolino station their musicians under the windows of Isabella and Flaminia, commanding them to play and dance. The ladies show themselves and graciously thank the performers of the serenades for their attention. Pedrolino and Pantaloon withdraw joyously with the instrumentalists. Isabella, remaining at her window after their departure, begs

Flaminia, who is also at her window, to honour by her presence the marriage which she is about to contract with Flavio, who has long been her lover. The affair, she says, has been arranged and concluded by her brother the Captain. Flaminia, wounded to the heart, declines the invitation and withdraws in tears. Isabella, after this fresh trick, and after having wounded the hearts of Flavio and Flaminia, but knowing full well how to heal them, withdraws well pleased.

PANTALOON, PEDROLINO, BURATTINO

Pantaloon shows Pedrolino a pair of new shoes which he has bought for twelve *baiocchi* (sixpence). Pedrolino, after having examined them, declares them to be old shoes, and that it is shameful for a man like Pantaloon to buy such things. Burattino, who is on his way to consult a doctor, asks Pantaloon if he will sell him the shoes for the twelve *baiocchi* he has paid for them. Pantaloon is quite willing. "But on one condition," says Burattino, "that is that each each of you shall stake a halfpenny with me, and that the first to repent shall lose his halfpenny." This is agreed. Burattino takes a knife and begins to cut through the sole of one shoe, saying, "He who retracts will lose his halfpenny." Having cut up one shoe, he takes the other one and begins to perform upon it the same operation. Thereupon he asks them, "Which of you two retracts?" and as each replies that he will not retract, Burattino says, "If neither of you retracts then I will retract." Whereupon, throwing down the two shoes, he continues on his way. Pantaloon and Pedrolino look at each other and perceive that Burattino has fooled them. They go off indignantly, and this ends the second Act.

ACT III

ISABELLA, HARLEQUIN, *and then* ORAZIO

Isabella tells Harlequin that she is going to talk with her brother Orazio, and should he question Harlequin, Harlequin is to bear out whatever she may say. Orazio arrives. Isabella then relates to him that Flavio has just arrived at her house, bringing with him a young girl from Naples, betrayed and abandoned by the Captain, notwithstanding that he had sworn to marry her. This young lady has trusted the loyalty of Flavio, knowing him to be a friend of the Captain's; but Flavio, desiring her to obtain reparation, has promised so to contrive that the Captain shall keep his word. To achieve this end he has thought of a trick: it is, of course with Orazio's permission, to tell the Captain that Isabella is in love with him, and that he should come to visit her at her house; there, however, he will find instead the young girl whom he has abandoned, and thus he shall repair the wrong by marrying her. Orazio consents and inquires, where is this young lady. "She is in my house," says Isabella. Harlequin, being questioned, answers in the same way. This decides Orazio to go in quest of the Captain, so as to send him immediately. Isabella goes in, followed by Harlequin, who can make nothing of the tales of his mistress and the answers delivered.

FLAVIO, FLAMINIA, *then* PANTALOON

Flavio, in despair from what Isabella has told him, comes to seek explanations from Flaminia. He knocks at her door and Flaminia appears. She is very angry with him. She weeps and complains that he has deceived her, but tells him that he may marry Isabella, and that she would be the last to throw any obstacles in his way. Flavio on the other hand overwhelms her with stern reproaches on the subject of Orazio, whom she wishes to marry. "I have never dreamt of it," exclaims Flaminia. In the middle of their dispute Pantaloon enters. He seeks to console her and reproaches Flavio for the beautiful tears which he is causing her to shed. He proposes a way out of the difficulty. It is that Flaminia should accept him for her husband and he will renounce Isabella, "whose conquest he had undertaken." Flaminia, in her vexation, tells Flavio that she will marry Pantaloon, old and ill though he may be, a statement which is but very little flattering to the latter. Flavio goes off angrily. Pantaloon, left alone with his future wife, attempts to caress her. He is rudely repulsed. Burattino goes mockingly to her aid, and Pantaloon, not knowing upon whom to vent his anger, insults Burattino and goes off.

BURATTINO, PEDROLINO, *then two rogues and* FRANCESCHINA

Burattino watches Pantaloon off, deriding his stupidity, when Pedrolino, disguised as a mendicant, with a long false beard, and a patch over one eye, enters begging. Burattino bids him go to the devil, and seek work. Pedrolino replies that it is through having worked too hard that he has been driven out of his own country. At this moment a rogue, a friend of Pedrolino, arrives disguised as a merchant, pretends to perceive him for the first time, salutes him, thanks him and gives him money to recompense him for the great service rendered him in procuring him an heir. The false merchant announces himself delighted at having found him, and departs. Burattino, having overheard this conversation, is anxious to understand the subject of it more clearly, when a second rogue, also in agreement with Pedrolino like the first, comes to announce to him that his secret, whence it results that none but boys are born, has once more been perfectly successful. Thereupon he also departs. Burattino then detains Pedrolino, who pretends to wish to go. He summons his wife, and behold the two of them questioning this mysterious operator. Pedrolino cannot reveal his secret, but tells them that they are free to experience the excellence of his occult knowledge. Husband and wife having consulted together, they draw Pedrolino by cajoleries into the inn.

The CAPTAIN, ORAZIO, ISABELLA

Orazio having taken the Captain into his confidence on the subject of Isabella's love for him, the latter is enchanted and consents gladly to the marriage. Isabella, summoned by her brother, and having manifested her joy in marrying the Captain, conducts him upon Orazio's permission into the house. She returns to tell her brother that she has had the Captain taken to her own chamber, where he will find the young Neapolitan girl whom he so little expects. Orazio laughs heartily at the farce played upon the Captain, and goes in quest of Flavio, to advise him of the good success of this affair. Isabella, who wishes to kill two birds with one stone, calls Flaminia.

ISABELLA *and* FLAMINIA. (*Night*)

Flaminia expresses her surprise at finding Isabella in the street at such an hour. "The reason is a very simple one," replies Isabella. "My poor brother Orazio is there in the house weeping and lamenting because you will not have him for your husband. Be generous, come and console him." Flaminia, still angry with Flavio, resolves to go. They enter Isabella's house.

FLAVIO, *then* HARLEQUIN *and* ISABELLA

Flavio, at the height of his anger against Flaminia, wishes to marry Isabella out of spite; he hopes that Orazio will readily consent to their union. Harlequin, sent by Isabella, comes to beg Flavio to wait a moment for his mistress, who desires to speak to him. Isabella arrives, dismisses her servant and makes false confidences to Flavio. She tells him that she is to marry the Captain against her will, and that she would very much prefer Flavio if he would consent. She is a widow and may marry again as she pleases, whilst Flavio is free, since Flaminia is marrying another. Flavio, persuaded, consents to wed her. They enter the house arm in arm.

PANTALOON, BURATTINO

Pantaloon, lantern in hand, is seeking his house when Burattino comes on to tell him that he had better prepare the hundred ducats promised to Franceschina, because she is undoubtedly going to give birth to a boy forthwith. Pantaloon, very happily, goes to seek the money. Burattino re-enters his inn.

ORAZIO, *then* HARLEQUIN *and the* CAPTAIN

Orazio, becoming impatient at not finding Flavio, makes shift to enter his house, and knocks loudly at the door, which he finds closed. Harlequin appears, carrying an enormous lantern and bids Orazio make less noise, or he will disturb the young married people. " Ah," he cries, " your sister Isabella is a clever woman, to have known how to get herself a husband and to marry Flaminia at the same time." The Captain, also lighting himself with a lantern, comes to grasp Orazio's hand and to thank him for having given him his sister to wife. Orazio understands nothing of all this.

FLAVIO, FLAMINIA, ISABELLA *and the preceding ones*

Flavio and Flaminia enter hand in hand, having made the peace, and they congratulate Isabella upon having so adroitly carried through this intrigue. Orazio inquires where is the young Neapolitan lady. Isabella confesses that the young Neapolitan lady and herself are the same person, and announces that the story which she invented was no more than a ruse to induce her brother himself to give her to the Captain, whom she loves. Orazio, having conquered his astonishment, finds the Captain of a rank equal to his own and announces his consent. A great noise is heard in the inn.

PEDROLINO, BURATTINO, FRANCESCHINA, *and the preceding ones*

Pedrolino runs on, chased by Burattino, who is armed with the kitchen spit and seeks his life. The others separate them and demand to know the reason of this quarrel. Pedrolino explains that, Burattino having mocked him, he, to avenge himself, had sworn to make a cuckold of him. " That, then," cries Burattino, "was your fine secret!" Pedrolino adds that he did not wish to execute it lest it should injure his reputation. But Franceschina replies that he lies, and that it was she who repulsed and beat him. Peace being restored, the Captain marries Isabella, Flavio marries Flaminia, and thus the comedy comes to an end.

It will be seen from this long yet succinct scenario, this skeleton or *ossatura*, as it was then called, that the comedy which was but in its beginnings in France was already an accomplished thing in Italy; that it was as soundly invented and developed as those which French authors began to indite some fifty years later. With the exception of the jests of the *shoes of Pantaloon* and the *supper of Burattino*, which have no connection with the action and which would seem to be two of those traditional scenes interposed perforce into all performances to satisfy a certain portion of the public, the scenario of *The Wiles of Isabella*, like all those of the same collection, is very ably put together and leaves nothing to be desired from the point of view of proportion and logical development. When compared with the contemporary works of such Frenchmen as Jean de la Taille it will readily be seen that the Italians were very much the masters. It is true that the pupils profited fully from the lesson, and that in the seventeenth century they were able to indulge in reprisals. But to Italy must be given the credit due to her of precocity in the arts. It is to be remembered that whilst she culled through the ages the fruits of her ancient civilisation, France strode towards the future, her hands empty of those riches which the past had bequeathed to Italy.

That which was made for France by her great masters was as the labour of bees; the flowers did not bloom on French soil; the flight of these ingenious and mighty spirits crossed the Alps and the Pyrenees, to gather the precious nectars and return with the honey. France is rightly proud of them, but it is necessary to be just. Before Molière, before Corneille, before Calderon and Lope de Vega, and forty years before the birth of Shakespeare, Angelo Beolco (termed Ruzzante) had —as we shall see—created the modern theatre.

iii

Giovanni-Battista Andreini, the son of Francesco Andreini and the famous Isabella, was born in Florence in 1579. He seems to have been the first actor to bear the name of LELIO in the theatre. In the *Gelosi* troupe he replaced Domenico Bruni (Fulvio) in the capacity of lover.

After the death of Isabella Andreini in 1604, the *Gelosi* troupe was disbanded. G. B. Andreini undertook in 1605 the management of the *Fedeli* troupe, which was recruited by more than one of the old *Gelosi*. In 1601 G. B. Andreini had married in Milan Virginia Ramponi, a young and beautiful Milanese, known by the name of Florinda. After her death Andreini married in second nuptials the celebrated actress Lidia.

In 1613 Andreini wrote a blank verse piece in five acts dedicated to Marie de Médicis, which was performed in that same year in Milan. This piece, of a religious character (*rappresentazione sacra*), is entitled, *Adamo*. The characters in it are Adam and Eve, the Eternal Father, the Archangel Michael, Satan, Lucifer, the elementary Infernal Spirits, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seraphim, the Angels, Death, Hunger, the Flesh and the Serpent. In short, it is a mystery play of the fifteenth century.

The Milanese edition of 1613 is extremely curious, with its engravings by Procaccini interposed in every scene. Its dedication to the Queen of France stirred in her the curiosity to know the author and the company. He went therefore to Paris in 1613, and remained there, playing several of his pieces, until 1618. He was installed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne from 1621 until 1625. He lost his father in that year and bade farewell to France in a work half theatrical, half mystic, entitled *Teatro Celeste.*

"*Teatro Celeste*, in which we see Divine Mercy calling several penitent and martyred comedians to the ranks of the blessed in Paradise, in which those who practise the profession of the theatre are poetically exhorted to follow their art without offending virtue, and not only to leave upon earth an honoured name, but further not to close against themselves by vice the path which leads to Paradise. Dedicated to my most illustrious and most reverend lord and very respected patron the Cardinal de Richelieu. By Gio. Batt. Andreini of Florence, known in the theatre as Lelio."

In this work Andreini sings the praises of pious comedians. He puts forward his claims in favour of his profession. One of his sonnets is in praise of St Ardelion, a pagan actor, a martyr like St Genest. Another is in honour of Giovanni Buono of Mantua, who, retiring to a cloister, lived in penitence and was considered a saint: "he who so long excited laughter is transformed into a fount of tears."

Again, it is the beatification of Brother John the sinner, the ancient comedian of Adria, who, in his conventual cell, "affords the angels the spectacle of his mortifications and his piety."

Further on we have the praise of comedians who lead virtuous lives in the practice of their art. A whole sonnet is consecrated to the memory of his mother, Isabella Andreini. He compares human life such as it is in the world's theatre to a mad theatrical performance. The poet exhorts actors of disordered life to re-enter the path of good conduct. Then, in his last sonnets, he bids farewell to the theatre and to the world and aspires to do penance. "Deceiving stage, I go! Never again shall I tread thy boards, tricked out and proud. I abandon all that vain lustre even as I withdraw from the lovely land of France."

Andreini departed, in fact, with his troupe (the *Fedeli*); but he remained nevertheless their Director until 1652, when at last he retired at the age of seventy-three, "honoured by the favour of princes, appointed master of the hunt of the Duke of Mantua and a member of the society of the *Spensierati*." He wrote so great a number of pieces, pastoral plays, comedies and scenarii, that no biography has yet been able to include a complete list.

In the year 1622 he published in Paris *La Sultana*, *L'Amor Nello Specchio*, *La Ferinda*, *Li Due Leli Simili*, and *La Centaura*. His pieces are redolent of the taste of the epoch; they are full of obscenities. Riccoboni says of him:

"Giov. Battista Andreini was a man of wit and of letters, and I am sure that had he lived fifty years earlier he would have followed the path trodden by others and would have left us some good comedies; but after all he was both author and comedian, and he could not write anything of a fashion other than that of the wits of his epoch and other than his interest urged him."

iv

Marco Romagnesi, an actor of talent, known under the name of Orazio — also written Horatio — went to France somewhere about 1645 together with his wife Brighida Bianchi (Aurelia). Loret gives an account of the performances which took place at Vincennes in 1659, in which "the husband of Aurelia did marvels."

ORAZIO in dress and manners is a gentleman of the period. He wears a moustache and the *royale* of 1643—a cut of beard invented by King Louis XIII., who "was one day taken with the fancy to have the beards of all his officers cut in such a fashion as to leave them merely a little tuft on their chins." A lampoon was written on the subject:

> "Hélas, ma pauvre barbe,
> Qu'est-ce qui t'a faite ainsi ?
> C'est le grand roi Louis,
> Treizième de ce nom,
> Qui toute a ébarbé sa maison."

"However ridiculous that may be, all the world appeared presently with a beard *à la royale*," and the long love-lock, termed at first *moustache*, and later *cadenette*, in commemoration of M. Cadenet de Luynes, who wore the most beautiful love-lock that was ever seen, tied in a coloured ribbon. This fashion, which had already been in vogue for some years, was still considered in good taste, as well as the great felt hat decked with white plumes.

Orazio's costume consists of a pale green doublet, a colour in the very best of taste; breeches of white satin, laced with silver and decked with ribbons tied into a knot in the place of the old garters, which had now passed out of fashion; silk stockings, and shoes with large pale green rosettes. A white baldric embroidered in silver carried his long rapier; he leaned upon a cane, and was curled, pomaded and perfumed.

There you have Orazio marching to the assault of the heart of Aurelia or Isabella, and, like the lover conceived by Saint Amant in his enumeration of the reformations which he considers to be a lover's due, he no longer smokes.

Notwithstanding this extreme care of his person, and under this effeminate exterior, Orazio is a cavalier as dangerous to his rivals as to the ladies who have caught his eye. Like Don Juan, fathers, tutors, husbands, brothers and servants cannot turn him aside from his enterprises. He has always a sword-thrust ready for his rivals, a cuff for his lackeys, and flattery that is honeyed, persuasive, and fraught with a dash of raillery, for his mistresses. He is a gentleman of the *dernier bien mis*, as the phrase ran then; one who knows of life nothing but its luxuries: dress, horses, duels and women. He quits the arms of Aurelia to run and throw himself at the feet of Isabella, and if on the way he meets the soubrettes Beatrix or Diamantine, he forget his latest passion to dally with them, and to betray even his valet. As prodigal of his life as of his purse, he is brave to the point of temerity, and his rivals all give way before him. The type of Orazio is something more than a lover; he is a hero of gallantry whose device is: "Fais ce que veux, advienne que pourra."

Romagnesi played these parts down to the time of his death in 1660.

In 1653, Turi, born at Modena, a son of the actor who played the parts of Pantaloon, was to be seen in the rôles of second lover under the name of Virginio. After the death of his father he left the theatre at the age of forty and withdrew to Modena, where he took the habit of the order of barefoot Carmelites. A few days after having pronounced his vows he died, and he was interred in the convent (1670).

In 1660, the Italian company being definitely established in Paris, the cardinal summoned from Italy a leading lover (*primo innamorato*) to make good the loss which the company had just sustained in the person of Marco Romagnesi. An actor whose stage name was Valerio came to take up this position and occupied it until 1667.

Andrea Zanotti of Bologna, known in the theatre under the name of Ottavio, made his début in Paris on the Italian stage in second-lover parts, which he played from 1660 until 1667, when he was promoted to leading lover. Towards 1684 Zanotti retired from the theatre and returned to Italy with his family. He was an excellent comedian. He was surnamed "the old Ottavio," to distinguish him from Giovanni Battista Constantini, who played in 1668 also under the name of Ottavio.

V

After the departure of Ottavio, Marco Antonio Romagnesi took up the leading parts, and played them until 1694 under the name of CINTHIO, which was already in existence. A lover whose real name we have been unable to ascertain had already borne it in Rome in 1550.

It is under the pompous name of Cinthio del Sole that Marco Antonio Romagnesi, born at Rome, made his first appearance in Paris in 1667. He was the son of Marco Romagnesi and Brighida Bianchi. He succeeded Valerio, whose family name is unknown. We behold him, in the collected plays of Gherardi, dressed after the fashion of a young man of quality at the end of the seventeenth century, with the huge Louis XIV. wig, the pointed lace collar, waistcoat and coat of a long cut, a sash round his middle, a round hat slightly cocked, the crown encircled by feathers. This is the classic costume of the young men of Molière, of Léandre, Ottavio and all lovers.

In *Colombine Avocat*, Cinthio, passing in front of Harlequin, who, pretending to be a marquis, is richly but grotesquely dressed, surveys him from head to foot and then takes him by the sleeve to ask him, " Is that the fashion ? "

HARLEQUIN. Yes, sir, the fashion. What has it to do with you ?

CINTHIO (*coldly*). Are you not called the Marquis Sbrufadelli ?

HARLEQUIN. Yes, sir, the Marquis Sbrufadelli is my name. What have you to say about it ?

CINTHIO. And you are to marry Isabella, the Doctor's daughter ?

HARLEQUIN. Certainly, and none shall hinder me. I am a gentleman of quality, and a man of heart, by heaven !

CINTHIO (*deriding him*). Ha, ha, ha ! the lovely fellow !

HARLEQUIN (*thrusting down his hat with one hand, and placing the other upon the hilt of his sword*). What ? To a man such as I ? By death ! By——

CINTHIO (*drily*). What are you going to do with that sword ?

Harlequin (*suddenly softening*). I want to sell it, sir. You don't happen to want to buy it, do you ?

Upon the death in 1694 of Angelo Lolli, who played doctors, fathers and tutors, Romagnesi took his place and played such parts until 1697, under the names of Cinthio, old Oronte, Persillet, Grognard, the Bailie of Bezons, the Doctor, etc. He remained in Paris until the suppression of the Théâtre-Italien, and died there in 1706. He had married in Italy in 1653 Giulia della Chiesa, who never played in comedy, and who died in London in 1675 on the occasion of a journey thither made by the Italian troupe.

" Cinthio was a man of wit who wrote both in prose and in verse. In 1673 he printed in Italy a volume of heroic, amorous, sacred and moral poems which were highly esteemed by the most famous Italian poets. He was a sound philosopher, very learned in letters, affable in conversation, polished in manners and very honest in his sentiments. His family was noble and distinguished."

He wrote a large number of scenarii for the theatre.

Under the name of Aurelio, Bartolomeo Ranieri, a Piedmontese, had succeeded Zanotti (Ottavio) in the parts of second lover. His début in Paris took place in 1685. He was just a mediocre actor, " but he was unable to control his tongue and his political opinions, wherefore the court, informed of his malevolent reflections, commanded him to return to Italy." He departed in 1689 and went to resume his interrupted studies of divinity. He took Holy Orders and Riccoboni speaks of having several times beheld him in the discharge of his sacred office.

vi

On the 2nd November 1688, Giovanni-Battista Constantini, a younger brother of Angelo Constantini (Mezzetin), who had left his native place, Verona, made his first appearance in Paris under the name of OTTAVIO.

"On the 2nd November 1688 the Italian comedians performed for the first time a comedy entirely in Italian entitled *La Folia d' Ottavio.* The title-rôle, which is that of a lover, was filled by a young man who is a son of Gradelin and a brother of Mezzetin. He was applauded by the entire assembly. He performed on seven different kinds of instruments—namely, the flute, the theorbo, the harp, the psaltery, the cymbal, the guitar, the hautbois, and to these he added on the morrow the organ. He sings agreeably and dances very well. He is of a very good shape" (*Note of M. de Tralage*).

Ottavio succeeded Aurelio in the parts of second lover. In 1694 he assumed the leading rôles, when Cinthio abandoned them for those of doctors and fathers. In 1697, after the expulsion of the Italian comedians by order of Louis XIV., Constantini returned to Verona, and rendered important services to the French generals during the war of 1701. The Imperialists avenged themselves by pillaging his property.

"The Chevalier de Lislière, sent by the King into Italy to reconnoitre the positions, encampments and movements of the enemy, attests that the Sieur Constantini Ottavio, a gentleman of Verona, has given essential proofs of his zeal and of his attachment to France; he undertook several journeys by order of the generals, and he was so useful that he was the first to bring them news of the advance of the enemy in Italy. This he did at his own expense, refusing the emoluments which the generals offered him; the enemy, learning this, and being informed of his zeal for France, have wrecked his property in the neighbourhood of Verona. He has asked me to give him this certificate, and as I was frequently charged with communicating to him in the orders of the generals, I am unable to refuse my testimony of the zeal and attachment of the said Sieur Constantini to the interests of France, and of the disinterested manner in which he has afforded proof of this.

"Given at the camp of Saint-Pierre de Linage, the 12th June 1701.

"(*Signed*) LISLIÈRE."

Ottavio returned to Paris in 1708 completely ruined, and in recompense for the services which he had rendered to the army before Verona he received from the King, through the interest of the Marshal de Tessé, the post of inspector of all the barriers of Paris. This important office enabled him to set up a sort of Italian theatre at the fairs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent in 1712. But, as he was an extravagant man and of but little method, he did bad business. Later on, when the Italian troupe was summoned to France by the Regent Orléans in 1716, he went to offer his services to his compatriots, who accepted them with pleasure. But whether through disorder, or the incapacity of the people he employed to set up the machinery and carry out the repairs at the Palais-

Royal, his comrades dispensed with him at the end of a month.

He died at La Rochelle in 1731. "He was a man of wit and of talent but, like his father Gradelin and his brother Mezzetin, the unbridled love of women and of the table left him in indifferent circumstances throughout his life and in misery at the end of it."

Giovanni-Battista Constantini married in Italy a very beautiful woman named Teresa Corona Sabolini, who played under the name of Diana. But she never accompanied her husband on his journeys into France.

In 1694 Carlo-Virgilio Romagnesi, the grandson of Aurelia and Orazio, made his début at the Comédie-Italienne under the name of Léandre. Gifted with a handsome countenance and an innate talent for the dramatic art, he played all the lovers' parts until 1697. When the Comédie-Italienne was closed he joined the troupe of Tortoretti, and toured with him through France. He fell in love with Elisabetta, the daughter of Giovanni-Battista Constantini, who was also touring the country, went with him to Lorraine and then returned to Paris in 1707, where he married the lady. He died in 1731.

vii

"Luigi Riccoboni, who played under the name of Lelio, was born at Modena in 1674. He was the son of a celebrated comedian, Antonio Riccoboni, and, following in his father's profession, he was seen, always with success, in the rôles of leading lover, under the name of Federigo. He joined the company of Signora Diana, the wife of Giovanni-Battista Constantini, known in the old troupe under the name of Ottavia Diana. She induced him to abandon the name of Federigo for that of Lelio, which he always bore thereafter both in Italy and in France. Riccoboni had married in first nuptials the sister of Francesco Materazzi, who played the parts of Doctor in the troupe of the Regent d'Orléans. This first wife was named Gabriella Gardelini, and played soubrettes; but she abandoned this line for that of second lady. She died young and without leaving any children to Riccoboni, who later married Elena Baletti (Flaminia)."

Luigi Riccoboni had been entrusted with the formation of the Italian troupe which went to France in 1716 under the title of *Comédiens ordinaires de S. A. S. monseigneur le duc d'Orléans, régent de France.* He was then twenty-two years of age. He retired in 1729, together with his wife Flaminia and his son Francesco Riccoboni; but Flaminia and her son returned to the theatre a little while afterwards.

Lelio played with a great deal of spirit; "No one ever expressed overwhelming passion with so much verisimilitude." To his gifts as an excellent actor he added those of a distinguished author. He wrote some thirty pieces and, moreover, a history of the Italian theatre, an Italian poem on the subject of declamation, and observations on comedy and on the genius of Molière. Upon retiring from the stage he repaired to the court of the Duke of Parma, who gave him the management of the theatres of his duchy and of his house. After the death of this prince. Lelio returned to France, where he died in 1753 at the age of seventy-nine.

"In the year 1690, at the age of thirteen" (he writes in his

History of the Italian Theatre), "I began to frequent the theatre. Almost all the comedians of those days were ignorant fellows; lovers' parts were played by the sons of comedians, men of no education, or else by young people who embraced the profession out of principles of libertinism."

Riccoboni speaks, in this history, of an actor who, like himself, sought to uplift the *bonne comédie*—that is to say, the classical comedy written in verse and learnt by heart.

"As in all professions," he says, "there is often to be found in this one a man of wit and of taste who detaches himself from the others; during the last days in which the comedians were still at liberty to go to perform in Rome during carnival, a young man of that great city was attracted to comedy, and followed the troupe. He had the good fortune to fall into the hands of Francesco Calderoni (Silvio) and Agata Calderoni (Flaminia), his wife, the grandmother of my own, who, having preserved a remnant of this art (classical comedy), opened a good door for him and showed him the good path.

"This young man, in his quest of distinction, passed through all the degrees of comedy and, by his application and study, succeeded in becoming the head of a troupe, and the greatest actor of his day. He of whom I speak is named Pietro Cotta, surnamed Lelio; he has always been accounted a man of great probity, the avowed enemy of all equivocal thought and of all that licence which, at the end of the last century, was so very much in evidence in our disordered theatres."

In fact, Cotta's aim was to uplift comedy in every sense. It was in Venice that he produced, for the first time, *L'Aristodemo* *del Dottore*, and he took care to inform his public "that there was no Harlequin in the piece, but that the subject was very moving." This new species of spectacle attracted only a small number of admirers. *Rodogune*, *Iphigénie en Aulide* did not amuse the great public. Some other directors sought to imitate this new classical school, but without success. The public demanded Harlequin, Brighella, and Pantaloon, cudgel-blows and broad buffooneries. Pietro Cotta retired in disgust.

Riccoboni went to France imbued with this mania for tragedy, but in France there was no need of Italian comedians to provoke tears; laughter was wanted. Therefore Riccoboni, having missed his aim in France, withdrew to Parma, where he gave performances of tragedies and French classic comedies translated into Italian; in these Pantaloon and the Doctor became truly noble fathers, and the lackeys, Harlequin and Scapino, similarly lost their original characteristics.

Riccoboni, it is plain, was consumed by the singular desire to destroy the Italian comedy, this Commedia dell' Arte to which he owed his best successes, and of which he speaks in his book like a competent and intelligent man. Perhaps his sombre physiognomy, "which aided him to depict terrible and extravagant passions," suggested to him the idea of throwing himself into the serious and tragic style. Nevertheless he had enjoyed a real vogue in his real line.

"The success of *L'Italien Marié à Paris* and the liveliness of the dialogue in the scenes between Lelio and Flaminia caused many to doubt that they were really being played impromptu. The enemies of the Italian company and French comedians added weight to these suspicions. This question was continually discussed in Paris, especially at the Café Gradot, where literary people then assembled."

The two volumes of Riccoboni, entitled, a little presumptuously, *Histoire du Théâtre Italien*, form a work which it is useful to consult on the subject of the Italian theatre, although it is very incomplete, and written indifferently, yet agreeably, by an Italian who employs a French entirely his own, but who is wanting neither in wit nor good sense. He appreciates with exactness and subtlety the art of the theatre, although in the application of his theories he is very often wanting in taste, a circumstance which goes to prove that criticism is very much easier than practice.

Luigi Riccoboni took with him into France as second lover, in 1716, Giuseppe Baletti, surnamed Mario, who, in 1720, married Giovanna-Rosa Benozzi, very well known under the name of Silvia. Giuseppe Baletti, who was born in Munich, died in 1762.

On the 13th April 1725, Giovanni-Antonio Romagnesi, the son of Gaetano Romagnesi and grandson of Marco-Antonio Romagnesi (*Cinthio*), made his first appearance at the Comédie-Italienne in the rôle of Lelio, was well received, and continued to appear in lover rôles under this name. He was born at Namur in 1690. His mother, Anne Richard, after the death of Cinthio, married again, in Brussels, a man named Duret. This man ill-treated his stepson, who had already made his début in his mother's company with considerable success. He was then fifteen years of age. Incensed by the harshness of his mother, and in despair under the ill-treatment of Duret, he resolved to leave them and to become a soldier. He enlisted with a captain who treated him no better than his parents had done, notwithstanding that the youth, to make a friend of him, had presented him with his watch, the most precious of his possessions. In the end Romagnesi, unable longer to endure his ill-treatment, deserted and joined the troops of the Duke of Savoy, where he enlisted with another captain whose brutality was even worse than that of the first. Falling thus from Scylla into Charybdis, he wrote to Quinault, who was then in Strasburg, and informed him of his sorry plight. Quinault replied, inviting him to go to Basle, where he would find the means to reach Strasburg. Romagnesi deserted for a second time, and, travelling from convent to convent, he managed to keep alive and to reach the gates of Basle without a halfpenny, and in rags.

But, at the gates of Basle, he discovered that no one approaching from the side of Savoy was admitted until he had undergone a searching interrogatory. What was he to do? A hundred paces from the town he perceived a herd of pigs driven by a child of ten. He advanced upon the boy and, taking possession of his whip, ordered him in a voice of thunder to wait an hour before re-entering Basle. He then set out, driving before him four or five of the largest pigs. "You will find them again," he said, "at the entrance to the faubourgs of the city." Thus, driving his pigs before him, he entered without hindrance in the wake of his herd, which he left at the place indicated to the boy.

He ran to the post, but failed to find there any letter from Quinault. The carrier would arrive only upon the morrow. This delay was hard upon a man who had not eaten that day, who did not know a soul in the city, and who had not a farthing in his pocket. He went to an inn, demanding supper and a bed, but his shabby appearance inspired no confidence in the hostess; she demanded payment in advance. Romagnesi then confessed that he was without money, but assured her that he would receive a remittance on the morrow, and be able to repay her. The fulfilment of such a promise seemed doubtful; it was in vain that he employed all his eloquence; it was wasted labour. He was on the point of being dismissed when a neighbouring baker, touched by the speech which he had overheard, undertook to pay his bill for him, should he fail to do so himself.

On the morrow the baker went to the post with Romagnesi. They found a letter from Quinault in which he announced his arrival that evening. In effect, he arrived, and it would be difficult to express the joy of Romagnesi, "which he expressed whilst tenderly embracing Quinault and weeping for gratitude." Quinault kept the baker to supper when he learnt the service which the man had rendered to his protégé.

On the morrow, having equipped his new friend more suitably, Quinault set out with him for Strasburg. As Romagnesi's desertion was occasioning Quinault some uneasiness, he thought it prudent to inform the Commandant of the place and the Intendant of the city. He related to them in detail the adventures of young Romagnesi in the most favourable possible light. Protection was accorded him, with the assurance that Quinault could cause his actor to make his début whenever he thought fit. At the end of a fortnight Romagnesi made his first appearance, and scored a great success. His uneasiness ceased entirely, thanks to an amnesty which was published and to a formal dismissal from his captain, who had received the order to issue it. After two years in Strasburg Romagnesi quitted Quinault's company to enter Ottavio's performing in Paris at the fairs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent which had become known as the Opéra-Comique. He undertook there, and always with success, the rôles of lover. It was there, in 1716, that he began to write pieces for the forain theatres.

Ottavio, having done bad business, gave up his theatre. Romagnesi then went to tour the provinces until 1718, when he returned to Paris and appeared at the Théâtre-Français; but he was not received there. He went to Bordeaux, Brussels, Cambrai; whence he returned to Paris again in 1725, and appeared at the Comédie-Italienne in *Les Surprises de l'Amour*. He was accorded a good reception in this theatre, "of which he long sustained the glory as much by his talent for declamation as by the success of the pieces which he performed there," which amount to some sixty-two.

"Romagnesi was tall and well made; his voice was a little muffled, and he appeared to labour when he had to recite any rather lengthy couplet. He was a good actor in all lines, but excelled particularly in drunken rôles and in impersonating Swiss and Germans." He died suddenly at Fontainebleau in the arms of Mademoiselle de Belmont, on the 11th May 1742. The curé of Fontainebleau having refused him burial, his body was interred in Paris in the church of Saint-Sauveur.

Francesco Riccoboni, the son of Luigi Riccoboni and of Flaminia, was born in 1707 at Mantua. He took up the parts played by his father under the same name of Lelio. His first appearance took place on the 10th January 1726, and in 1729 he left the theatre together with his father. He re-entered it with his mother in 1731, and there played and danced with success intil 1736. He then went to tour the provinces, returned to the Comédie-Italienne in the following year, and left the theatre for good in 1750. He was the author of several Italian pieces, and died in 1772. He occupied himself also with alchemy. He married Marie-Jeanne Laboras de Mézières, who was at once an actress and the author of many esteemed romances.

Antonio-Luigi Baletti, the son of Mario and Silvia, was, on the 1st February 1741, received at the Théâtre-Italien under the name of Lelio to declaim and dance. On the occasion of his début his mother Silvia addressed a speech to the public in which she craved their indulgence for a child who, notwithstanding maternal representations, had insisted upon facing the dangers of a first appearance. He was well received, together with Carlo Bertinazzi.

On the 23rd February 1670, the comedians gave a benefit performance in his favour of the *Serva Padrona*, to compensate him as far as possible for an accident which he had suffered in the theatre.

In the last act of *Camille Magicienne*, Pantaloon leads on some soldiers to force an entrance into a tower in which Camille has imprisoned Lelio and Flaminia ; it was customary to discharge several shots against this tower. One of the soldiers who was to take part in the assault had, whilst waiting, placed his gun beside that belonging to the sentry of the theatre, who had quitted his post. The scene being reached sooner than was expected, the soldier was called ; inadvertently he took the weapon of the sentinel, which was loaded, and put a bullet through the thigh of Baletti (Lelio). The performance was suspended, but the incident had no serious result.

In 1759 Zanucci undertook the rôles of Lelio or Mario in the forain theatres. Other principal lovers were: Dulaudet (1714), Deshayes (1718), Raguenet (1750) Joly (1737), Brou (1740).

viii

The earliest type of LEANDRO is a fresh and rosy lover, fluttering ribbons and lace. He is the accepted suitor of the beautiful Lavinia, of Isabella or of the naïve Beatrice. Thus he was at the time of his creation in 1556 in the Italian companies.

Corneille, Molière, Destouches present him in their pieces under a seductive exterior. His aspect is the same at the Théâtre-Italien down to the end of the seventeenth century, and we have already said that Carlo Romagnesi, renowned for his beauty, had made his début at the Comédie-Italienne in 1694.

This rôle, after the death of Carlo Romagnesi, was suddenly transformed, both in Italy and in the forain theatres; it came then to be that of a ridiculous personage entitled *Leandro il bello*, and this surname of "the beautiful Leandro," which was well deserved by Carlo Romagnesi, was no more than a derision when applied to the Leandro who was thereafter to be found in pantomime. The transformation was not infelicitous. Leandro has the privilege of making us laugh. To see this personage strutting the theatre like a cock, his head lost in his ruff, his sword pointing upwards behind him and threatening the eyes of his neighbours or becoming entangled in the legs of his lackey, it would seem that we have not here a lover, but a sort of Matamoros. And as a matter of fact, this beautiful Leandro is always the son of some captain, a great slayer of Saracens; he too is in love with Isabella or Columbine; he deigns to condescend even to this soubrette when she is the daughter or ward of Cassandre; but notwithstanding his beautiful curls, his lace ruffles, his doublet, peaked like that of Polichinelle or of Matamoros, the sword of his ancestors, his titles, and the parchments which he always bears upon him, he never succeeds in receiving anything but kicks aimed at his stomach, but, thanks to the promptitude of his evolutions, always delivered at another address.

He is a Spaniard, a hidalgo of the old rock. He is no doubt rich, to judge by the silver embroideries upon his pink or yellow garments, and the simple Cassandre never fails to be imposed upon by his exterior. When he speaks, he bleats horribly. He holds himself as stiffly as a pine-tree (it is supposed that he wears corsets); he boasts to her whom he desires to marry of his *bonnes fortunes*, for which he has never failed to pay dearly; he submits to beatings from Harlequin, and flees at the approach of any danger. He is totally ignorant of everything, with the sole exception of the art of heraldry. Awkward and very susceptible, he never suffers anyone to pass in front of him; he frequently carries his hand to his rapier, but no one can remember ever to have seen its blade.

Sometimes he is dressed like a marquis of Louis XV., but he possesses all the virtues of the hidalgo, whether under his hempen wig or under his short red hair.

LELIO

In *Cassandre aux Indes,* a farce of the boulevard theatres (1756), Leandro is in love with Isabella. Cassandre on his departure for the Indies had confided his daughter to the guardianship of Harlequin; the latter permits himself to be bribed by Leandro, who desires to penetrate to the presence of Isabella. After having ransacked the pockets of the lover, the lackey finds there: " A book to learn to read; a paper snuff-box; a book of puerile civility; a solar quadrant and a chain; a patch-box in white metal; a currycomb; a leather glove." All this is not worth very much, so that Harlequin demands that he shall write him a note for ten crowns in exchange for which Leandro may have speech of Isabella.

Leandro, who is unable to write, makes a cross upon a piece of paper. The conventional jests on the subject being exhausted, Harlequin goes in search of Isabella.

LEANDRO. I am going to pay her a little impromptu compliment carefully prepared.

(ISABELLA *enters followed by* HARLEQUIN. LEANDRO, *without removing his hat, addresses her the following compliment.*)

Lady, the admiration of your beauty has filled my heart with love of your fine eyes; and should you feel a reciprocity for your very humble servant, there is no happier man upon earth than I should be in all the world.

ISABELLA. Sir, it would be impossible to find a compliment more gallantly expressed, and I tell you frankly that you would suit me very well as a follower, were it not for a detail which is but a bagatelle, namely, that I am distressed to see that you are suffering from scurvy.

LEANDRO (*his hat still on his head*). Lady, I assure you that is no longer the case. I was cured at the age of sixteen. A scurvy gentleman would be an impossible thing!

ISABELLA. Sir, I have the honour to tell you that I perceive from my window that you are making eyes at me. It might be fitting that I should be moved to love you, but I have noted something which stifles my tenderness ; in short, if you are not suffering from scurvy, you are clearly suffering from ringworm.

LEANDRO (*still without taking off his hat*). If a man were to offer me that insult, I should cut his face in two ; but since it is you, lady, the respect which I must bear to my affections compels me to respect you.

ISABELLA (*dropping a curtsy to Leandro*). Farewell, sir. I found you an ass, I leave you an ass.

HARLEQUIN (*laughing and mimicking* ISABELLA). I found you an ass, I leave you an ass. (*Exeunt.*)

LEANDRO (*alone*). What does it mean ? I don't understand. Oh, heavens, I did not take off my hat ! Behold me lost for all time ! Is it possible that I, who would take off my hat to a dog, should not have taken if off to my charming mistress ? She will desire no further commerce with me. I am in a fury, which causes me the greatest sorrow. There is nothing left for me but to go and drown myself ; if only I had poison at hand, I believe that I should pass my sword through my body !

Polidoro, the ridiculous lover of the fifteenth century, in a comedy of Beolco (Ruzzante), is the true modern Leandro, ugly, ungracious, unhealthy, but rich and confident of the power of his ducats.

" In short," he says, " money is the true means of obtaining everything. I have taken my precautions to monopolise the favours of my beautiful lady, because I am not one of those who consent to be alone in the expense and accompanied in the pleasure." To him enters the little servant of Celega, the *entremetteuse.*

POLIDORO. Go ahead, Forbino, and tell thy mistress that I am coming. Make haste !

FORBINO. I go, but at least give me something for the good news which I brought you on the subject of your rival Flavio.

POLIDORO. I shall give but too much to thy mistress.

FORBINO. Devil take her. I want you to give me something for myself also.

POLIDORO. Be off quickly, rascal. Hast learnt to be insolent!

FORBINO. A plague on you! I would give a ducat, if I had it, that Flavio should get the better of you, that he should find the money that he lacks, and that you should be left in the street to sing the *todolina!*

POLIDORO. Gallows-bird! If I come at thee!

FORBINO. Give me something.

POLIDORO. Cuffs will I give thee.

FORBINO. None but a fool could wish ill to Flavio. He is worth a good deal more than you, who in all your life have never given me a coin.

POLIDORO. Wait! I will give thee one that is worth ten.

FORBINO. Only a fool would wait. My compliments to you.

In the following century the name of Polidoro is bestowed upon old men, as in *Gli Afflìti Consolati*, by Alfonso Romei of Ferrara, in 1604. In a burlesque fairy play (*Les Pilules du Diable*), which took Paris by storm, Leandro was called *Sotinez.*

Laurent the elder, a remarkable mime who had played Harlequins in many little theatres, gave this personage a costume, gestures and a physiognomy entirely noteworthy, and in the true colour of the Italian farce.

VII

RUZZANTE

There is no such thing as useless labour. However arid or trivial a subject may seem, from the moment that you embark upon a study of it, your researches will always lead you to some serious discovery that will compensate you for your trouble.

Our thanks are due to thee, brave and good Ruzzante, thou mighty dead whom we have found lying in the dust of oblivion; thou whose work, rare in Italy and unknown elsewhere, has permitted us at last to look upon the Commedia dell' Arte as a Muse of the same blood and the same nobility as those of Shakespeare and Molière.

Of the life of Shakespeare very little is known; nothing is known of that of Angelo Beolco, surnamed Ruzzante, born at Padua in 1552. Was he an actor by profession, or was he no more than an amateur in the pursuit of his avocation? The only information of any consequence in existence is that afforded by a page of Bernardino Scardeon in his work, *De antiquitate urbis Patavii*, 1560:

> "Angelo Beolco, known under the name of Ruzzante, was in Padua what Plautus was in Rome as an author and Roscius as an actor. He has even surpassed them, for there is no comedy of antiquity, *prætextæ*, *togatæ*, *mixtæ*, or *atellanæ*, that can sustain comparison with the comedies of Ruzzante, which were played throughout Italy, afforded so much pleasure

and attracted such crowds of men and women. As for himself, he was so superior to other actors that whenever he was on the stage the public neither saw nor heard anyone but him."

It might be added by us that Ruzzante surpassed Plautus in the composition of comedies, and as for his having been superior to Roscius as an actor,[1] we are compelled to admit it, judging from the incomparable naturalness of his compositions and his language.

Ruzzante's was a brilliant epoch. It was in the hour of the awakening of comedy in Italy that he too awakened in all the strength and freedom of his eminently original genius. Very inferior to him on the score of individuality and novelty are his illustrious predecessors: Ariosto, who at the age of twenty (in 1494) had already produced at the court of the Duke of Ferrara his comedy entitled *I Suppositi*; Niccolo Macchiavelli, author of *La Mandragora* (1504) and *La Clizia* (1508), which latter Leo X. commanded to be performed before him in Rome by the *sempiterni* or the *intronati*, the academic actors of Florence and Siena; and Bernardo Dovizi, Cardinal of Bibbiena, author of *La Calandra,* written in 1490. These did not create a new style; they revived a dead one. They walked in the ways of the masters of antiquity, and whilst they may have overtaken them they did not surpass them. Ruzzante, far more daring and creative, completed and embellished all the subjects to which he set his hand. He created a comedy of realities in the midst of the pastoral idylls of the Venetians by which he was surrounded.

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[1] Gennari, in his *Saggio storico sulle accademie*, page 21, calls him "the new Roscius of his day, an admirable man, a prodigious actor and the author of very clever comedies."

Ruzzante would certainly have been the Molière of Italy if, instead of spending his days in improvisation, he had employed them in writing; for it is only in the last years of his life, which was all too brief (he died at the age of forty), that he co-ordinated and wrote the greater part of his subjects as well as his charming discourses to the Cardinals Cornaro and Pisani, etc.

It was his custom to reside during the summer at Codevigo, the Venetian villa of Aloysio Cornelio, a munificent and liberal gentleman who was his Mæcenas, and who cherished Ruzzante and his troupe. In return this troupe gave many performances at Cornelio's house.

According to Scardeon, the city of Padua was about to honour Ruzzante when he died, on the 17th March 1542. His friends and numerous admirers raised him, in 1560, a tomb in the church of San-Daniele in Padua, near the Prato della Valle, with the following epitaph in remembrance of him and "in earnest of affection, esteem and admiration":—

V. S.

ANGELO BEOLCO

Ruzanti Patavino, nulli in scribendis, agendisque comœdiis ingenio, facundia, aut arte secundo, jocis et sermonibus agrest. applausu omnium facetiss., qui non sine amicorum mœrore e vita discessit anno Domini MDLII die xvii martii, ætatis vero xl. Jo. Baptista Rota Patavin. tantæ præstantiæ admirator pignus hoc sempiternum in testimonium famæ ac nominis P. C. anno a mundo redempto MDLX.

Ultimately, however, this inscription having been found too profane—we do not know by whom—it was removed.

Bernardino Scardeon tells us that Ruzzante was of a joyous and amiable character, invariably pleasant and affable. His face, to judge from the portrait of him which survives, denotes a fine wit, gifts of observation and satire, and a firm and melancholy character.

Almost all the characters of his comedies bore surnames which afterwards became generic names, and so remained in the theatre.

" In the performance of his comedies, his stage companions were young people of the nobility of Padua, such as Marco Aurelio Alvarotto, called *Menato*; Girolamo Zanetti, called *Vezzo*; Castegnola, called *Bilora*; and some others who were able to imitate the language of the peasantry."

It is even possible that Aloysio Cornelio himself, Ruzzante's splendid protector, took part in their performances, and may have been, by antithesis, the character of the miserly Pantaloon, who, under the name of Cornelio, fills so large a number of rôles in Ruzzante's pieces.

Benedetto Varchi, the famous author of *The History of Florence*, speaking of the various kinds of comedy, writes on the subject of the ancient plays:

> " If one may judge from experience and give faith to conjectures, I think that our *zanni* are more comical than were their mimes, and that the comedies of Ruzzante of Padua, treating of rustic subjects, surpass those which the ancients called *atellanæ*."

"Our best writers" (says Riccoboni) "have been loud in praise of Ruzzante. His comedies, superior to the Latin atellanæ in comicality, admit all the dialects of the corrupted languages of Lombardy. It was he who settled for the theatre the character and the language of Scapin, Harlequin, Pantaloon and the Doctor."

In truth Ruzzante was the first to open the doors of comedy to popular dialects. All his characters speak different languages, from Paduan, Bergamese, Bolognese, Venetian and Tuscan to Latin, Italianised Spanish and modern Greek. But it is the dialects of Padua, Venice and Bergamo that are chiefly employed by him.

His early efforts were in the academic manner, and he sought to rival by the purity of his style Bembo, Speroni and the other authors of his epoch. Notwithstanding that he had quite as much talent as his colleagues he was dissatisfied with his success. Perceiving too that he remained far below the level at which he aimed, he devoted himself to the study of rustic dialects, and of the customs, manners and characters of the peasantry. So admirably had he acquired their language and their ways, so exactly did he seize all their naïveté, originality and humour, that he deceived the very rustics, who, when they saw him disguised, assumed him to be one of themselves. Beolco manifested a quite peculiar predilection for them, and criticised for their profit the manners of the great, the learned and the luxurious.

"Would you not be a hundred times more worthy" (he asks in one of his prologues), "if you were to content yourselves as we do in our country homes with eating good bread and good solid cheese, and drinking an honest red wine, rather than consume sauces and all sorts of dishes which swell your stomachs ? You would be fresh and rosy as apples instead of withered as you are. I dare swear that if one of your gentlemen came to grips with one of our women he would be worsted ? Why ? Because our women are not nourished upon sweetmeats but upon natural food, and because, living as they do in the open air, their limbs are stronger and their thews more vigorous."

Ruzzante never misses an occasion to exalt the uses of rustic language. In a letter written in Paduan, addressed to the Most Reverend Cardinal Cornaro Vecchio, he says :

"I do not see why, since I take my peasant characters and present them on the stage, I should expect them to use Tuscan (*in lenguazo fiorentinesco*) rather than Egyptian. At present the world is all awry, and everyone seeks to lift his head higher than is possible to him. No longer is anything done according to nature ; every man permits himself to be dazzled by the pretensions of his neighbour instead of remaining in a state of simplicity. It is also sought to change our language rather than to allow us to speak in the language which is proper to us. Instead of keeping to his own straight road, everyone runs to that which dazzles him, and that, as I say, is bad. Shall I do the same, I who am a Paduan of Italy (*che a son Pavàn, della Italia*) ? Shall I go and convert myself into a Tuscan or a Frenchman ? No, by the blood of the scorpion ! No, I shall not. It is my desire to remain and to walk in the way of truth and of naturalness.

"Let no one amongst you be surprised to hear me speak a language that is not Florentine; I will not exchange my language for any other. I think that I may just as sincerely desire your health, fortune and happiness in my coarse Paduan as another might do in a finer and lighter tongue."

Beolco played a number of parts in his own pieces, and came forward always to announce the argument. Arrayed usually in an allegorical or fantastic costume, he would deliver his little address to the public:

"Let us amuse ourselves a little. Is there anyone amongst you who knows who I am? You have the air of wishing to reply that I am Mercury, or a reciter of arguments of comedies. No, you will never guess it! I won't leave you in doubt any longer. I am an elfin spirit. Do you know why I show myself, why I permit you to see me? Do you know whence I come? From the other world; and I will tell you why. One of those who is there, called Actius by some and Plautus by others, has sent me to tell you that since a comedy is to be played this evening you are not to blame me if it is not in Latin and in verse and in beautiful language, because if to-day he were among the living he would not write comedies in any other style than that of this which you are about to witness. He begs you not to judge by this one those which he left written; for he swears to you by Hercules and Apollo that they were recited in other days, in terms very different from those which you see printed now, for the good reason that many things which look well upon paper look ill upon the stage."

It seems to us that the whole *raison d'être* of comedy improvised in free dialect is to be found in these few words.

Everywhere, whether from personal instinct, whether from contagion from the pastoral mode, Ruzzante presents apologias of the rustic life. Nevertheless it must not be assumed that he was a writer of *bergeries* like Florian; he is a realist in his pictures of the miseries and passions of the precarious and savage life of the peasants of his day. The brutal passion which induces him, in *La Fiorina*, to carry off by force a young girl, gagging her by the aid of a friend, is probably an instance copied from nature in those days of war and rape and violence. But if he dares to present such dramas upon the stage with an almost ferocious recklessness, he also makes heard the voice of indignation or of pity.

"By the blood of the ill of the cripple!" (exclaims old Teodosia—we cannot undertake to explain this bizarre malediction), "we see strange things to-day. Ill living is the fashion, and I think that before long we shall know no safety in our huts. Consider what a surprise awaits this poor father and this unfortunate mother! I am overwhelmed by the desire to weep."

In a letter which he addressed under his stage name to Cardinal Francesco Cornaro, he thanks Rome for having sent to the city of Padua this noble prelate who revives his failing hopes. These letters, written in the old Paduan dialect, are his masterpieces. They are the inditings of a naïve peasant who has the right to say anything. Therefore they are gay, because to ensure their being read it was necessary that they should excite laughter. But this laughter is fraught with tears. They are not the letters of a historian paying his court, they are those of a brave and generous man who loves his country and speaks the truth. Here are a few brief fragments—very brief lest we should be charged with too great a digression from our subject:

"Rome, our grandmother, who gave you your hat, O good cardinal, did not give it you to shield you from the sun, and to save your complexion, but so that it may shelter us all; and under your purple cloak it is your duty to gather us all to your heart as a hen gathers her chickens. Restore to us our trust and our peace. Consider what this country has become. No longer are young men and maidens to be heard singing on the highways and in the fields. The very birds sing no longer, and I believe—may the plague choke me!—that the voice of the nightingale is no longer as beautiful as of yore. No longer do we see games and merry-makings. Such is the misery that has fallen upon our land that one may truly say: blessed are the dead who are beyond the touch of war, of ruin and of pestilence! We are worse off than in the days of the great slayings, days in which men saw incredible happenings, days in which fathers butchered their sons. To-day the times are so ill that husband and wife will go each a separate way to seek a livelihood. And love too has departed hence. Seek to find me a lover! There is no longer anyone who will take a wife. Wives must be nourished and how may that be done when there is nothing in the house? So that, instead of sighs of love one hears naught but groans of hunger. Charity goes knocking from door to door, and none will give her shelter under his roof. We no longer dare so much as to weep when following the bier of a beloved dead, lest we should drench too many handkerchiefs." (Then, adopting a tone of pleasantry, he proceeds:) "Be our friend, for I am well disposed to be yours. You may invite me as often as you will to dine with you; I can refuse you nothing, not even good advice."

It is necessary to remember that Ruzzante lived in the early days of the sixteenth century, amid the wars of Francis I. and Charles V., who were disputing for the possession of Italy, when the terrible invasion of the German army was descending upon Rome, leaving behind it a country devastated and in ashes. The holy city was taken by assault, sacked and given over to two months of pillaging by the Lutherans. Florence was ravaged by the plague; and Ruzzante's own country, Padua, was desolated by famine. And so, in his comedies, he pours furious curses upon Spaniards and Germans.

"May the plague consume them all," he cries, "wars and soldiers, soldiers and wars! But we must laugh nevertheless, my friends, we must render ourselves numb to our sufferings!"

It is also noteworthy that in the midst of the liveliest buffooneries Ruzzante will often confront us suddenly with a terrible situation, a flash of real passion, a profound reflection or a cry from the heart. The serious side of his spirit reveals itself in the most concise, but also the most energetic manner, and in the truest and most touching terms; unfortunately these are often untranslatable because the dialects are inseparable from the characters. He was a thousand times right in his contention that had he given these another language they would have been no more than conventional types.

Chiefly to concern us here, however, is the buffoon side of Ruzzante, for it is through this that he belongs to the Commedia dell' Arte. His gaiety is very often bitter, tragic and hideous, some of his pieces bear no title; they are printed simply under the designation of dialogues.

Bilora. Who could have foretold that love would so rudely have thrust me out of my own house, to throw me amid people whom I do not know? It is said that love will not or cannot do anything. But I see instead that it does what it likes. As for me, it is love which has compelled me to come to seek my hidden wife. Had it been otherwise I should not have tramped all yesterday, all last night and all this morning through woods and fields. I am so tired that I can scarcely stand. A lover is drawn by his love more irresistibly than by three pairs of oxen. There are those who say that love lodges with young people and drives them mad. For my part I see that it can also haunt old men, for had it not pierced the heart of that old gossip—may a scorpion eat him!—he would not have brought my wife into this town. Could not that old usurer have taken pleasure in his ducats without seeking it in my wife? By the blood of the scorpion! it was an ill turn to have served me! But I shall so contrive that in some way I shall wrest her from him. Ah, but who knows whether I shall so much as get a glimpse of her? I should have done well to have gone to his house. . . . I am dying of hunger and I have neither bread nor money with which to buy it. If I but knew at least where she is living, that is to say where he has lodged her, I should so move her that at least she would give me bread.

(He is about to withdraw when he meets an old acquaintance. This is Pittaro, an old peasant whom he qualifies as *barba*, as who would say bearded.)

Pittaro. Eh, *cagasangue!* Is it Bilora? What are you seeking here?

Bilora. I am come about the affair of Messer Andro—

help me to pronounce his name—Androtene or Ardochene, that old foreign gentleman who carried off my wife.

Pittaro. You were wrong to come. What do you expect of your wife, who seems to have forgotten you? It will hardly suffice just to go and ask for her to ensure her returning with you. She is leading a pleasant life with him, without care or trouble; she eats and drinks as much as she pleases and she is well served, for there is a lackey to wait upon them both.

He relates that old Andronico is madly in love with Bilora's wife and that she appears to manifest some attachment for him. He advises Bilora to depart, assuring him that there is nothing to be done, but Bilora does not heed the advice.

"Would it not be better that she should return home with me? If I were to meet the old man I might strike him. I want so much to see my Dina! Is she alone at the house?"

Pittaro repeats that no course is open to him but to depart. That he must not be seen thereabouts. But Bilora consigns him to the devil; he is so tormented with love, fear and rage, that he cannot resist his desire to behold his wife. He knocks at the door of the house; Dina appears at the window.

Dina. Who knocks? Who is there? Is it you, poor man? Depart in peace.

Bilora. Yes, I am very poor, but that is no reason why I should depart. I am your friend; approach, Dina. It is I.

Dina. And who are you? What friend? The master is not at home. Begone!

Bilora. Ah, Dina, come here a moment, it is I. Is it possible that you don't recognise me?

Dina. I tell you to be gone, and that I don't know you, that the master is absent. He went out upon business and I have no wish to gossip.

Bilora. Oh, my dear Dina! Do come here! I wish to speak to you sincerely. It is I, Dina. Do you not see that I am Bilora, your husband?

Dina. Alack! Is it indeed you? What do you seek here? Speak!

Bilora. What are you saying? Come down here that I may see you.

Dina. I am coming.

Bilora. Yes, come with me, and I shall hold you good and true as you were before.

Dina (*below*). Good evening! I am here since you insist. How are you? Are you well?

Bilora. I—I am well. And you? How well you look!

Dina. Heaven be thanked! Nevertheless, to tell you the truth I feel none too well. This old man wearies me.

Bilora. Youth and age never can agree. You and I would be better suited to each other.

Dina. And then, he is always ailing. He coughs at night and keeps me from sleeping. At every hour he comes to seek and weary me, to take me in his arms and kiss me.

Bilora. Well then, tell me, would you not sooner return home, or do you wish to remain here with this old man? Speak!

Dina. I should be glad enough to come, but he does not wish it. Neither does he wish that you should come here. If you but knew the care he takes of me, how he caresses me! By the fever! he loves me dearly and I am very well with him.

Bilora. But what does it matter what he wishes if you wish it? Oh, I understand. You don't wish it either, and you are telling me lies, eh?

Dina. How shall I answer you? I should like to come, and yet I should not like to come (*vorràe e si no vorràe*).

Bilora. Heaven is not propitious to me to-night. Will it be long before the old man returns?

Dina. He should return almost at once, but I should not like him to find me with anyone. Come, my dear. You will return in secret and we will come to an understanding.

Bilora. Yes, we will come to an understanding by means of kicks! Take care, by the blood! If I begin I shall be worse than a soldier!

After further threats from Bilora, Dina tells him that she will advise him when the old man returns home, so that Bilora may demand of him her return, whether he wishes it or not. Dina will do what her husband wishes. After that Bilora asks her for a piece of bread, saying that he is dying of hunger because he has not eaten since he left home. But Dina, saying that she can abstract nothing from the house, gives him money to go to an inn, where he may eat and drink at his ease. She re-enters the house, and Bilora goes off, after some reflections upon hunger and love, and after cursing the old man and considering the coins which Dina has given him, whose effigies supply him with witticisms that it would be difficult to translate.

Messer Andronico then enters, discoursing alone upon women, and upon love at a ripe age. He knocks at the door, saying: "Open, my pretty, my beauty." The door opens, and he is about to embrace her when he discovers that it is his lackey, Tonin, who has received his honeyed praises, and whom he now denounces for a brute and a donkey. Thereupon both go within.

Bilora and Pittaro re-enter. Pittaro asks him whether he has fared well, if the wine was good, and so forth. Bilora, after replying that he is "full," begs him to be the mediator between himself and Messer Andronico, whom he continues to call *Ardoche*: "You will tell him that Dina has a husband, and that he must let her go, whether he desires it or not, because she desires it. And that I will kill him if he refuses—that I am a soldier, and a bravo, which will intimidate him. If he surrenders her all will be well; if not, let him look to himself.

Bilora goes off, and Pittaro, after having knocked at the door, and undergone the usual interrogations from Dina, is permitted to speak to Messer Andronico.

PITTARO. Good evening, Messer and Excellency.

ANDRONICO. What brings thee, Pittaro?

PITTARO. I want ten words with you in confidence. Come this way, sir.

Andronico. What is there, then, so interesting?

Pittaro. You shall learn. You know without my telling you that you carried off Dina, the wife of that poor lad Bilora. He has lost his head over the affair. I beseech you, Excellency, in your own interest, to let her depart with her husband. For reflect, my very dear sir, that it was highly imprudent in you to have carried off the wife of another. And further let me tell you as a friend that she is far from old, whilst you are too advanced in years to have so young a woman. Forgive me, Messer, the frankness of my speech.

Andronico. Do you want the truth? I shall do nothing of what you ask because I cannot give her up. Do you understand? I am resolved to spend my life with her. What the devil! Do you think I should let that girl return to the country to suffer with that great coward Bilora, who gives her more cudgellings than bread? No, no! I want her for myself. I will not throw nutmeg to swine. Do you suppose that I should have carried her off as I did to let her go again so easily? I, who have worn a cuirass and carried a shield all summer, like a Rodomont? I, who have gone armed day and night, who have suffered so much fatigue to save her trouble? Bid Bilora seek elsewhere what he requires.

Pittaro. But what is he to do? Do you want him to go mad?

Andronico. And what of me? Do you want me to die of despair? Let him go mad, how can I help it? You are tiresome. You begin to anger me. Go to the devil! And not another word on this subject!

Pittaro. Do not become heated, sir. Let us be wise. Let us call Dina, let us question her, and let us see what she will say. If she wants to go, let her go; if she does not, keep her and do as you please. What do you say?

Andronico. No doubt you are right. But do not suppose that she will be of the same way of thinking. She has just told me that she will never leave me for any other man in the world. I cannot believe that she could so quickly change her mind. Still I will do as you ask, and thus you shall learn the truth. (*He calls.*) Dina, my pretty! listen! come here!

Dina. Did you call me, my master?

Andronico. Listen, my pretty: this good man is seeking you on behalf of your husband, and we have agreed that if you want to leave me I shall let you go, that if you want to remain you shall remain. You know that you are happy with me, and that I shall never let you want for anything. Do as you will and as you please, I say no more.

Dina. To go with my husband? I don't want to! To be beaten? My faith, no! I would to heaven that I had never known him, that greatest of all the cowards that eat bread! I say it once for all, I don't wish to return to him.

Andronico. Well, well, well! Are you satisfied? When I told you this you would not believe me.

Pittaro. But listen, girl! She herself told Bilora, not half-an-hour ago, that she wanted to return to him, but that you did not wish it.

Dina. I? I never said anything of the sort. To whom did I say it? As the good wife says, I leave that lie to him who invented it.

Andronico. Go in, my dear, and do not trouble yourself further. (*To* Pittaro.) What do you say now? What further can you ask?

Pittaro. I, sir? Nothing further. I want what she wants. But let me tell you that Bilora is a man to be feared; he bears you no good will, and you would do well to return his wife to him.

Andronico. What do you mean by that? Explain at once. Do you threaten me? Do not anger me. I am quite cool, and I tell you frankly that you are a fool. Begone at once. Once for all I will not surrender Dina. Do you understand? I am going home. See to it that I do not find you here when next I go forth. Let that suffice.

Pittaro promises to depart and never to be seen again. After Andronico has gone in, Bilora enters. Probably he has heard everything for he reproaches his gossip with not having succeeded. Thereupon Pittaro, becoming impatient, and angered already by Andronico, tells him that he is tiresome; but he tells him this in the energetic words which in those days were still permitted in the theatre. Whereupon he seeks to lead Bilora away with him, but since Bilora refuses, he bids him go to the devil, and departs.

Bilora (*alone*). No, I shall not go. My affairs are all upside down; it is enough to make a schoolboy die of laughter, and I don't know what to do. This old man has ruined my life. It would be better that he were dead and buried. Let him but come forth and I shall tell him what I think of him, and so manhandle him as to knock the life out of him. Yes, but he will scream in fear if I do that! Better perhaps to do as the Spanish soldiers do; that will not leave him time to say eight words. Let me draw my knife from its scabbard. Let us see if the blade is bright. By the scorpion, it is none too bright, so perhaps he won't fear it. Accursed old man, may you but come quickly, I shall flay you alive. I shall take his clothes and I shall sell them, together with my cloak, to buy a horse so as to travel far. I shall turn soldier and live in camps, for henceforth I shall hold my house in horror. Whoever likes can have it. Ah! would he but come forth. Chut! Here he is! May the plague burst the old fool. The moment is choice, provided that no one comes. Here he is! Ah! now he shall not escape me.

Andronico (*in the doorway speaking to the servant*). What animal is that, wandering round the house at this time? Some drunkard? Do not come, Zane, remain indoors. I am going to take the air to calm myself; keep Dina company and then come and seek me in the fourth hour of night with a lantern.

Zane. I shall come as soon as possible. Do not be uneasy.

Andronico. Zane, shut the door. I shall go this way.

Bilora. May death eat thee, thou worn-out old man! Take that! and that! (*He strikes him.*)

Andronico. Oh, my sweet son! Oh, my lad! Mercy,

mercy! To me! to me! help! fire! fire! fire! I am being murdered! Treason! Fire! fire! To me! I die! I am dead! (*He falls.*)

BILORA. Fire! Ay—into the fire of hell shalt thou go. Return me my wife now. Did I not tell you to let her be? But he is dead, he does not move a limb. Ah! you have laughed your fill, eh? Didn't I warn you, eh?"

This ends the piece. This *dialogue*, whose energy and colour is lost in translation, is, as will be seen, a tragedy, but a real tragedy; just so might it have been in reality upon some Venetian *traghetto*, one of those flights of steps so often drenched with blood, to be washed a moment later by the waters of the canal as they bore away the body. The original is most arresting. It contains no fiction, no ideal. Each character thinks and speaks as in actual life. But how extraordinary the humour and how rude the fibre of a public that could laugh at these scenes of despair and murder that were seasoned by the most frightful jests!

Bilora's monologue is remarkable for its truth to life in an epoch in which dramatic convention was surcharged with emphasis: we behold an assassin who premeditates and does not premeditate; one who desired and did not desire. He wanted to beat and to insult his man; if the man died, so much the worse. The peasant is neither brave nor evil; he is not proud and he has not the honour of the gentleman; he loves his criminal wife, he regrets her, he desires her, he will have her, he will beat her and he will love her again. That is the child of nature. One can understand how much an actor of intelligence might extract from such a situation, fraught with laughter, tears and terror.

The dialogue we have just indicated seems a sort of revenge taken by the fancy of Ruzzante upon that which follows, in which he plays the part of a poltroon, or rather of the soldier captain.

MONOLOGUE OF RUZZANTE RETURNING FROM THE WARS

Behold me at last arrived in Venice. I was as impatient to get here as the lean mare is impatient to see the grass sprouting in springtime. At last I am going to see my Gnua (*Genoveffa*)! To hell with camps and wars and soldiers! I shall no longer be disturbed by rolling of drums and braying of trumpets which set me trembling. I shall no longer hear the cry "To arms!" I shall no longer be afraid! When the cry "To arms" rang out, it was as if I had a press upon my stomach. And then the musket-shots! I tremble no longer; I am brave now; I shall be able to sleep and dream as much as I like. I shall eat when I like, what I like, and too much if I like. I shall digest. I shall go as I please. Saint Mark! Saint Mark! I am at last in safety. I travelled swiftly; I have done more than sixty miles a day. I came hither in three days from Cremona! It is not as far as people say. They will tell you that from Cremona to Brescia it is forty miles; it is but a stride. From Brescia to Peschiera they say it is thirty. From Peschiera here, what can the distance be? I came in a day although it is true that I walked all night. Faith! my legs are aching, although I am not tired. The fact is that fear drove me and hope sustained me, and my shoes bore the burden. I want to look at them. May the scorpion eat me! Now here is one with no sole left. That must have been in the war. If I had had the enemy behind me I could not have walked faster. I look like a thief in these clothes, which I stole from a peasant. But the clothes do not matter. I am in safety. . . . Then I took a boat at Fusine. If I had been killed in the war and I were no more than a ghost I should not be here now. Ah, but no! ghosts don't eat. I am myself. I am alive. I must go and look for Gnua and my gossip Menato, who has also come to live in Venice. But here he comes. Heh! gossip, it is I, Ruzzante!

MENATO. Is it you, gossip? I should never have known you. You are so changed! But be welcome. Do you come from the wars? Have you been sick or in prison? But what an evil countenance, gossip! You have the air of a brigand. Forgive me, but I have seen more than a hundred men who were hanged, and never one with so evil a countenance as yours.

RUZZANTE. That is the effect of misery and war, of bad drinking, bad eating, hunger and thirst. Had you but been where I have been!

MENATO. You talk like a book, my friend. Have you then learnt to speak Florentine?

RUZZANTE. He who travels the world must make haste to learn. I speak French too, but were I to address you in that language of a certainty you would not understand me. I learnt all through fear in a day, and I glory in it.

Hereupon follow several untranslatable pleasantries upon alleged Florentine and French words, with explanations in the Paduan dialect and interpretations by Ruzzante. Menato then turns to the subject of the rags worn by Ruzzante. Ruzzante tells him that he conquered them, sword in hand, from a peasant whom he had wounded. "A plague on these good-for-nothing peasants," he says.

MENATO. But, gossip, now that you are a soldier, you no longer believe yourself a rustic, eh? Are you become such a roarer that you would eat iron?

RUZZANTE. Had you been where I have been, you would also have learned to eat not only iron, but weapons and baggage as well, for having no money by which to live I sold all that I possessed at an inn.

MENATO. Is that all that you have brought from your assaults upon the enemy?

RUZZANTE. I never sought to do the enemy any ill. Why should I have done so? The enemy never did me any harm. I made war upon cows and mares, and sometimes I took prisoners.

MENATO. You look so much like a bad soldier that no one who sees you will believe that you have ever been to war. I had looked to see you return crippled in a leg or an arm, or with your face scarred or an eye missing.

RUZZANTE. Valour does not lie in wounds and cripplings. Do you imagine that four men could make me afraid? Had you but been where I have been you would take another tone. You would have done things which you have never done. It is not necessary to limp or to be short of an arm to go through one of those battles in which one can do nothing against so many. In those affairs no one knows anybody, gossip. You hear everyone crying: "Kill! kill!"—Harquebus shots here, and partisan strokes there. You see your comrade drop dead, and then it is your turn; and if you attempt to run away the enemy charges you, and a shot out of somewhere breaks your spine. I tell you that courage is necessary to attempt to escape or to go into hiding. And do you suppose that anyone wastes his time trying to hide? Now look at me who am speaking to you. I pretended to be dead and all the cavalry rode over me. If the mountain of Vesuvius had been rolled over my body it could not have been worse. I am telling you the truth. It is necessary to have courage to come back alive. Once as I was running away a cavalier and his horse that were also running away, trod on my heel and stripped my shoe of its sole as you can see.

Menato inquires whether all his campaigns have brought him any money. To this Ruzzante replies with his sacramental phrase: "If you had been where I have been you would not have brought back more than I have."

But the aim of his journey is his well-beloved Gnua, who, according to Menato, has forgotten him, and is at this moment established in Venice with the familiar of a cardinal. To this Ruzzante announces that it is a little thing for him to kill a man, and that he will kill this one even if he should be four men.

Ruzzante. But here is Gnua, gossip. Here she comes, faith! Now we shall see whether she will caress me. Hola! tell me, then, pretty one, don't you see me? It is I.

Gnua. Ruzzante! Is it thou? Alive? But in what rags, and what a piteous countenance! You have profited nothing then?

Ruzzante. I have profited enough for you since I bring you my carcass safe and sound as you can see.

Gnua. As for your carcass I can do very well without it. I had imagined you would have brought me some fine robe. I must go. I am expected. Let me go.

Ruzzante. To the devil with the love I bore you! No sooner have you seen me than you want to go again. I, who have returned from the wars on purpose to see you.

Gnua. You have seen me enough. To tell you the truth I don't want you to be a cause of trouble, for there is someone who is entertaining me very comfortably, and who knows nothing of our past adventure.

Ruzzante informs her that he is as capable of entertaining her as this other one; but Gnua has no wish to die of hunger with him. "After four months of business in the wars," she says, "you might at least have brought some money back. But I don't believe you were ever at the war. You have the face of a liar, and you probably spent your time in some apothecary's shop. I should prefer you if you had returned short of an arm or a leg, and perhaps blind or with your nose slit, anxious to earn money for me as you promised. He swore to me," she says to Menato, "to die or to return rich, and you see in what condition he returns; that is proof enough of how little he thought about me."

Ruzzante. I tell you that I was unfortunate.

Gnua. That is very possible, but I who have not been, and who do not want to be, unfortunate, am not going to be wretched with you. Go! Look after your own affairs, and I'll look after mine. I am going back to my man.

Ruzzante. To the devil with your man! I know no man of yours other than myself.

Gnua. Let me go, wretch, rascal, liar, good-for-nothing!

Ruzzante. Come with me, I tell you. Do not make me angry. I have changed, and you shall no longer lead me by the nose as you used to do.

Menato. Listen, my good girl, come with me! He is capable of killing you.

Gnua. He? Don't mind him. He is equal to killing nothing but a flea, the boaster!

The *Bravo* (it is thus that Gnua's lover is named) enters, falls upon Ruzzante and beats him until he falls. The Bravo carries off Gnua. When he has gone Ruzzante raises his head and addresses Menato:

Ruzzante. Have they gone, gossip? Make quite sure!

Menato. Be at ease, gossip; they have gone, there is none here.

Ruzzante. But the others, have they gone too?

Menato. What others? I saw only one.

Ruzzante. You are blind! There were more than a hundred of them.

Menato. Oh no, by the scorpion!

Ruzzante. Oh yes, by the scorpion! Do you pretend to know better than I? They were a hundred against one. If I hadn't pretended to be dead so quickly they would have made me so in reality!

Menato. You told me that you were so brave that in battle you knew neither friends nor relatives.

Ruzzante. Certainly! But what do you expect of one man against all the world. You should have come to my aid. Do you think that I am a Roland?

Menato. I assure you, gossip, that there was only one man, but I imagined that you allowed yourself to be ill-treated so as to rise up and fall upon him when he should have thought you dead. I expected you to prevent him from carrying off Gnua. Do you understand, gossip?

Ruzzante. I don't, gossip; I didn't even think of it. I flung myself down, I pretended to be dead as I used to do in battle so as to save my life. It is the safest way when so many enemies fall upon you.

MENATO. Gossip, on my faith, I tell you that that man was alone. Why didn't you defend yourself with your lance?

RUZZANTE. One against a hundred? There is nothing to do but run on those occasions.

MENATO. Gossip, there was only one, I tell you!

RUZZANTE. Very well then, if there was only one it is some treason or some enchantment of Gnua. What do you think? Do you think she is a sorceress? In the old days she led me to suppose that she was the most beautiful girl in the world; yet that is not true. There are many more beautiful than she. Now she contrives that one single man shall seem a hundred to me; therefore—may the scorpion eat her!—I will get her burnt for a witch. You are very sure that there was only one? You see what a valiant man I must be to have been able to bear so many blows!

MENATO. By the scorpion, there were blows enough to kill a donkey! I could not see the sky, they rained so fast. Are you not hurt? I don't understand how you happen to be still alive!

RUZZANTE. Habit, gossip. I am accustomed to it. I feel nothing. I have but one regret, and that is not to have known that there was only one. I should have performed the most beautiful drowning that was ever seen. I should have taken him and her and flung them together into the canal. Ah, scorpion! That would have been droll, and we should have laughed a little! I don't say that I should have beaten him! The love of Gnua is not worth so much trouble. But I should have flung him into the water. Do you understand, gossip? And of a certainty there would have been matter for laughter. Oh! oh! oh! oh!

We will conclude our quotations with an admirable letter of Ruzzante's to his friend and comrade in the theatre, Marco Alvarotto (Menego-Menato). Being in possession of no details touching the life of a man so supremely remarkable and interesting, and bearing in mind that if our aim here is to present the history of the types of the Commedia, it is also our aim, as far as possible, to present the history of forgotten talent and vanished glories, we think that we should reveal the aspirations and, as it were, the very soul of Ruzzante summed up in this letter. We behold in him a man young and handsome, melancholy like all great buffoons, suffering, probably, from weariness of spirit rather than from a dissolute life, for the chastity of his compositions is remarkable in an epoch in which libertinism presides in every dramatic and literary effort. Consider the subject of *La Mandragora* and that of *La Calandra*, and that this is the age of Aretino and so many other illustrious debauchees. From time to time Ruzzante manifests the cynicism and rude expression of his age, but this cynicism on the lips of peasants shocks far less than when it is found on those of fine gentlemen. The basis of his subjects is a moral lesson, sometimes tragic, sometimes moving. The eternal *becco comedia* in Ruzzante's work is as often terrible as ridiculous, and when the author presents to us a pure girl like Nina, in *La Piovana*, she is truly adorable. Further he conceals under the flowers of allegory a fine and delicate spiritualism as we may see.

" *To Messer Marco Alvarotto*

" Marco, my dear master, I rejoice with you in the pleasures you experienced at the hunt, and believing that on your side you would wish to participate in a joy which I have lately experienced, I am about to relate it to you.

" You will know that, finding this world the most beautiful country in the world, I took one day the firm resolve to remain in it for ever, or at least to be one of the last to quit it. Knowing full well, however, that it is no more the privilege of honest men than of any others to enjoy an existence which shall be more than an existence, I have indulged myself at length upon this subject in my little books[1]; these assure me that it is possible to live very long and even eternally, but that first it would be necessary for me to find a certain lady whom some call Modesty and others Wisdom, who has it in her power to bestow as long a life as one may ask of her; for some great personages long since dead are still living in their works. To this I answered: 'Oh, my brothers, my little books, you are trifling with me; this lady is like that herb which has the virtue of rendering invisible whoever wears it, but which is nowhere to be found.' Nevertheless I did not insist, knowing my books to be truthful and akin to honest men, who would not tell a falsehood for a thousand ducats. Thereupon I firmly resolved to seek this lady, and even though she were more hideous than Envy so truly to pay her my court as to persuade her promptly to come with me. But after having ransacked all my world of writing matter, after having sought and after having voyaged in my mind farther than the ships of Spain, without even finding a track of her footsteps, I fell one day into despair, like the gambler who is unlucky at the first throw. I cursed all writings, and in a passion I went to seek repose in the country.

"I was left alone by the hunt on one of our little hills called Este, awaiting the return of my dogs from behind another hill where they were chasing a hare. They were already so far that I could no longer hear their voices. It seemed to me that all things fell silent about me, and, whether as a result of this silence, or whether from weariness of mind, sleep entered gently and unperceived into my eyes, and he was no sooner within than, as it were, he set a chain upon the door and drove me out of myself. I desire to be, and I ought to be, grateful to him all my life, however long it may be, for the sweet and pleasant dream which caused me to see and hear things so lovely that it will be lovely to repeat them and even more lovely to believe them. Thus closed and double-locked as I have said, I beheld first of all our good and brave old Polo as he was in other days, so clearly that I did not have the courage to ask him whether he was living or dead. He was dressed in a festal robe, and seemed to be coming from the barber's, with a countenance which announced rather that he had dined well than that he had fasted. I cannot think how he came by his knowledge of my desire to live for ever (I believe the soul to be a thing divine), but, after wishing me a good day and a happy year, after having rubbed his nose on the right and left, after having twice drawn breath, he began to speak: 'Ruzzante, you have wearied yourself more over your books than ever I wearied my arms upon animals, and you will never be able to find the woman you seek unless I assist you and point her out to you. It is your mania for calling things by names which do not belong to them that leads you into error. You think her name is as you say. You seem to me much in the same case as that fellow who read *Balotta* upon a book on which was written *Checarello*. But come with me and I will lead you to her court, where you shall find many good companions to move you to laughter, even as you move others to it with your comelies or comegies (*con le to comielie, ò comiegie*), I know not what you call them.' "

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[1] The manuscripts were not printed until several years after his death.

It would take up too much space to translate here the entire discourse of the old peasant Polo to Ruzzante. He informs him, in short, that she whom he calls Wisdom is named Gaiety, and that he will be so happy upon beholding her, so joyous and so gay, that he will find by her that future existence which he seeks. "No longer will he suffer his dreadful pangs; no longer will he know pain; he will be able to breathe with all his lungs. An hour, a minute of this well-understood existence is better than a thousand years of a life which is unperceived." The peasant describes in his rustic fashion the happiness of existence. For him, to sing, to dance, to drink as much as he thirsts, to have apples, well-cooked beetroots and good chestnuts, to saunter and do nothing but look on, is not that the way of happiness, of gaiety and of joy rather than for a man to dribble his brains into books? They go along talking thus in quest of Gaiety, and their way runs through a fresh and smiling countryside, to which Polo draws Ruzzante's attention: "Have you ever seen a more lovely country, so surrounded with flowering hills and shaded woods, turning a quicker green from the last rains, these little streams bubbling over stones and losing themselves among herbs and flowers? Do you hear that little bird singing his song, *hairo, hairo, hairo*?" Across this earthly paradise, before the eyes of Ruzzante, is unfolded a whole world of allegorical figures, which come and go; these Polo explains to him after his own fashion:

"'Look your fill; we are in the land of Gaiety. Consider first this woman, here at my side. This is Prudence, Gaiety's principal cook. Then come Contentment and Pleasure, riding on horseback, in a carriage or in a boat. Look at this one rolling along the ground with his mouth so widely open that one may deem him on the point of bursting; this is Laughter. Look at that woman, beautifully attired and bejewelled; she is Fate. At her side is her brother Dance, who has removed his shoes that he may leap the better. Behold, he is dancing! These two ladies who come hand in hand are Mirth and Joy. The latter seems unable to contain herself, so constantly does she desire to sing, to dance, to gambol or play the lute. Further off is Kindness, embracing Friendship. Here are Peace and Charity. Look quickly that you may behold the Passing Hour which never more returns. There is one who goes before her whose name is Cock. He is the first to hear her. He advances, greeting her with song. Look at that one who is separated from the company, dressed in black. She is Corruption; it is she who spoils existence as the beasts destroy the plants. And there is Sadness with folded hands, her head upon her knees: to behold her glassy eye you might conceive her dead. Take no heed of this little fellow with a bow and a quiver at his hip; he is the worst of all; you could never believe how profoundly he is malicious. There is no existence so beautiful but that he will thrust himself in to ruin it with his wiles and his malice. His name is Love, but he is not the good Love, the child of God and of Liberty. I cannot think who were the parents of this evil child, but I suspect that they were Malice and Misfortune. Come on, run as if the plague pursued you. Do you not see? Jealousy is beside him with her scarlet raiment full of holes, to enable evil designs readily to enter in. Pain, drawing her lamentations, runs before Arson, which rolls upon the ground like a rabid dog. There is Caprice which never knows peace, which is never well where it is, which ever desires to be where it is not, which desires to be and not to be, and also desires to be another and yet not to be that other. Do not look because by dint of looking at all these we shall lose sight of Gaiety. Why do you stare at Love? Let him be.'

"Whilst he was speaking thus it seemed to me that I heard music. Not that of songs and instruments, but a something more harmonious, like a concert. It seemed to me that all this made up so beautiful a thing that it would be impossible to relate it in a thousand years, even with a thousand tongues. I wanted to look attentively so as to miss nothing, such was the pleasure I gathered from this spectacle. But my eyes seemed hindered I know not by what heaviness. Making yet another effort to open them the dream took flight, and I found myself restored to reality.

"At the same moment I beheld my dogs returning, driving the hare before them. They were so tired that one of them came to lie down before me and to let me take the palpitating hare from his jaws.

"I remembered my dream, and I bethought me that the music which I had heard greatly resembled the voices of my dogs. It seemed to me also that the cause of all those lovely things which I had seen coming and going in my dream were my dogs pursuing the hare, which, by passing again and again before me, caused me in the end to open my eyes.

"There you have my *divertissement*; laugh over it with some good companion. I kiss your hands and commend myself to you and to our friends, to whom I augur happiness and an existence as eternal as that which I was seeking.

"Ruzzante.

"*From Padua, on the feast of the Epiphany*, 1535."

It would be wrong for the *commedia sostenuta* to claim Ruzzante; he belongs to our subject every whit as much as Gozzi and Goldoni, those ungrateful successors of his who never mention his name, and who very possibly never read his works. In accordance with the ancient Italian custom, Beolco wrote his comedies after he had played them with his gay and clever comrades; he performed them at least partly in impromptu. Moreover in some of his pieces many scenes are no more than indicated in a few words, to be played and improvised by the actors; for instance:

"The Bravo enters and falls upon Ruzzante, etc.

"They now sing, and when they have done, Nale enters, and drawing his sword, advances upon Menego saying: 'Draw, traitor!' Menego, frightened does not draw but runs hither and thither receiving many blows."

Elsewhere: "Hereupon the priest makes a few signs and noises are heard which terrify Menego and Duozzo, whom the priest reassures, etc."

Some of the works of Ruzzante were preserved in the family of his protector Cornelio; others were published, some in their original text, some translated into Italian. Five of his comedies printed severally for the first time in 1551, and some of them reprinted more than once, were, in 1563, collected into an octavo volume in Venice by Giovanni Bonadio.

These were *La Piovana, L'Anconitana, La Moschetta, La Vaccaria* and *La Fiorina.*

An edition of the complete works of Ruzzante was issued in 1584 in duodecimo by Giorgio Greco at Vicenza. It bore the title:

> *Tutte l'opere del famosissimo Ruzzante di nuovo e con somma diligenza rivedute et corrette, et aggiuntovi un sonetto et una canzone dello stesso autore. Al molto magnifico signor Vespasiano Zopiano gentil'huomo Vicentino. Ristampate l'anno del Signore* 1584.

Another edition appeared in Vicenza in 1598, and a third and last edition, which is the best known, was published in 1617 in Venice by Domenico Amadio:

"The works of the celebrated Signor Angelo Beolco, a nobleman of Padua, surnamed Ruzzante, are," says the publisher in a preface to the readers, "so beloved and appreciated by all the world for their sentiment, wit, delicacy and erudition, that they are sought after by everyone as a most learned and interesting collection. Having regard, then, to this general desire, I have reprinted them with care, and I deliver them to the public revised, corrected, and conforming entirely with the originals on the score of purity of style and primitive simplicity. In delighting you with this book, I trust that the nobility of your soul will take into consideration my labour and my good intention, which are always at the services of the pleasure and the well-being of all."

This last edition includes the following works of the *very celebrated* Ruzzante: with the apologetic titles of the editor:

La Piovana, "or the history of the purse."

L'Anconitana, "a comedy which treats of love and which cannot fail to give pleasure."

La Rhodiana, "a surprising and very laughable comedy, full of very piquant sayings in various languages, by the very celebrated Ruzzante."

This last comedy is attributed to Andrea Calmo, a Venetian actor and author, a contemporary of Ruzzante's. There is reason to believe that it was written by Ruzzante after having been played from a scenario supplied by Calmo. That at least is what appears to be proven by the following fragment of the prologue:

" . . . It is the custom in Carnival time to amuse you with divertissements and performances of this style, but we should have been unable to have done it this year without the assistance of one of our companions, who, although unable to leave his own troupe, suggested to us and brought us the work which you are going to see performed this evening. We have been compelled, then, to have recourse to his good memory which has given us this work, a work which will undoubtedly please you if you will not make too much noise."

La Vaccaria, "a comedy no less witty than amusing."

La Fiorina, "a comedy no less piquant than delectable."

La Moschetta, "a comedy no less amusing than agreeable."

Three discourses by Ruzzante, "written and recited in rustic language. Works full of wit and sallies, and marvellously amusing."

Two dialogues "in rustic language, moral, witty and agreeable."

A dialogue "very facetious and very droll, played at the hunt in 1528."

RUZZANTE

The characters in the plays of Ruzzante are: In the rôles of fathers and of ridiculous and battered husbands, Messer Andronico, Messer Cornelio (old men of Venice), Demetrio Placido, Diomede, Ser Thomao, Pittaro, Sivello, Pasquale, Tura and Maregale; the lovers are Tancredo, Theodoro, Gismonde, Flavio, Roberto, Federico, and Polidoro (a ridiculous lover); the leading ladies are Ginevra, Isotta, Fiorinetta, and Beatrice; his peasant girls are Gnua, Fiore, Bettia, Nina, Ghetta and Dina; his soubrettes are Besa, Gita, Betta and Maddalena; in the rôles of mother he has Theodosia, Ruspina, Resca, Sofronia, Felicita, Celega and Prudentia (*ruffiana*), and Doralice (a courtesan); his rustic types are Ruzzante, Menego-Menato, Duozzo, Marchioro, Bilora, Bedon, Truffa, Vezzo, Loron, Forbino, and Siton; his intriguing lackeys are Tonin the Bergamese, Nale, Slavero, Garbuio, Daldura, Garbinello, Zane, Bertevello, Campeggio, Naso and Corrado (the German). In addition to these his comedies includes a notary and Piolo, a singer.

END OF VOLUME ONE

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